MODERN POETS AND CHRISTIAN TEACHING

MATTHEW ARNOLD

JAMES MAIN DIXON

JUN 10 1963

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AND

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PREFATORY NOTE

THESE studies, thrown into the form of eight lectures, deal with those phases and currents in the life and philosophy of Matthew Arnold which determined his religious creed and gave the final drift to his poetry.

Good poetry ought to be taken seriously and analytically. I remember the shock I received as a youth in reading in an intensely orthodox journal a favorable review of a book of poems which I knew contained avowedly agnostic opinions. Had these opinions been couched in prose, extreme denunciation would have fallen upon them. Now, true poetry is one of the subtlest mediums for influencing thought and belief, and its æsthetic appeal is only secondary. The theology in Arnold's prose and poetry is essentially the same, otherwise he would be no true poet; and the theology in both is extraordinarily warped and defective. My task has thus been somewhat of an ungracious one. To have treated Arnold from the side of whole-hearted eulogy would have meant an incursion into fairyland, as in the "Forsaken Merman," or into legendary history, as in "Sohrab and Rustum" or "Tristram and Iseult."

THE AUTHOR.

CHAPTER I

MODERN GERMAN THOUGHT IN ARNOLD'S TEACHING

If Matthew Arnold may be termed the poet-critic of England, then Goethe, the poet-critic of Germany, is to be regarded as his forerunner and instructor. Few thinkers in the whole record of literature have exercised upon men of light and leading so remarkable an influence as the German Goethe. In his lucid pages we find expounded the principles which are guiding our modern world, as distinguished from the world of mediævalism and authority which preceded it. Those who read at all deeply into poetry must feel how great is the gap that divides, say, Milton from Tennyson, or Pope from Arnold. It was the mission of Germany to place upon the most systematic basis the laws which regulate our modern theories of good and bad, of the admirable and the trivial. Of all thinkers, Goethe, with his large mind, best understood the full significance of the change; took in the final meaning of the drift toward evolution as an explanation of things, and weighed all human matters in a critical balance.

Arnold's very apposite and weighty verses on

Goethe I will deal with later. That he early came under the spell of the sage of Weimar is apparent to all acquainted with his life story. We find him constantly making such references as this in his Letters: "I read his [Goethe's] letters, Bacon, Pindar, Sophocles, Milton, Thomas à Kempis, and Ecclesiasticus;" and in his "Note-Book" Goethe's name once and again recurs. For instance, in the year 1878, he quotes Kestner on Goethe at twenty-four: "Vor der Christlichen Religion hat er Hochachtung, nicht aber in der Gestalt wie sie unsere Theologen vorstellen" ("While highly esteeming the Christian religion, it was not in the way our theologians conceive it"). Goethe has been called a modern pagan, and his conception of Christianity was certainly very far from the orthodox or evangelical conception. It does not seem that Arnold ever broke away from his spell as Tennyson did.

Practically, Tennyson's "In Memoriam" owes its existence to the break he had to make with Goethe's ideals of self-culture and perfection; but Arnold never came to the forking of the roads. It is no use attempting to place that great Christian apologetic, "In Memoriam," side by side with Arnold's poems, as if the final teaching were the same. Arnold remains in the lucidity or self-culture fold from which Tennyson departed per-

force, never to return. Arnold always regarded the poet-laureate as not much of a philosopher, but rather as a builder of words into sonorous phrases; the judgment, not of a jealous contemporary, but of an honest friend who saw things differently. Others, and I think rightly, rate Tennyson very high as a profound thinker.

Turn to the first section of "In Memoriam," immediately following the great invocation:

> I held it truth, with him who sings
> To one clear harp in divers tones,
> That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things.

This word "clear" denotes the lucidity so dear to lovers of classical literature, the characteristic of the best spirits of the pagan world. So Milton uses it:

> Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise—
> That last infirmity of noble mind—
> To scorn delights, and live laborious days.

Tennyson had this ideal before him when Arthur Hallam died; and the bitter experience made him root his faith deeper. But no crisis came in Arnold's life such as might test his spirit to its depths; he always remained essentially a fair-weather vessel, never venturing into the deeps where storms are raging, nor did any chance tempest strike him. To the end he appears lacking in finally rigorous logic and thoroughness

of thought, and in moral grasp and conviction of an overmastering kind.

Goethe purposely kept away from stormy waters. If we take his "Rule of Life," composed in 1815 and afterward expanded, as expounding his principles, we have exactly such a philosophy as might please and charm a thoughtful man except when he was fathoming the depths of despair:

> If thou wouldst live unruffled by care,
> Let not the past torment thee e'er;
> If any loss thou hast to rue,
> Act as though thou wert *born anew;*
> Inquire the meaning of each day,
> What each day means itself will say:
> In thine own actions take thy pleasure,
> What others do thou'lt duly treasure.
> Ne'er let thy breast with hate be supplied,
> And to God the future confide.

This "clearness" is the goal sought after by Matthew Arnold. In the poem which contains an exposition of his philosophy, "A Summer Night," there is a closing invocation to clearness:

> Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain,
> Clearness divine!
> Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign
> Of languor, though so calm, and though so great
> Are yet untroubled and unpassionate;
> Who, though so noble, share in the world's toil,
> And, though so tasked, keep free from dust and soil!
> I will not say that your mild deeps retain
> A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain

Who have longed deeply once, and longed in vain—
But I will rather say that you remain
A world above man's head, to let him see
How boundless might his soul's horizons be,
How vast, yet of what clear transparency!

How prophetic was Milton in declaring that the "clear spirit" had infirmities of its own! a love of distinction, a proud acceptance, if need be, of isolation. Dr. Thomas Arnold confessed that he had a weakness to be either Cæsar or nobody; proudly to assert himself or as proudly efface himself. This temper descended to his gifted son. A recent commentator, Professor Saintsbury, in estimating highly the poetic quality of this poem from which I have just quoted, questions whether the vague life-philosophy of Arnold expounded here and elsewhere—which, out of a melancholy agnosticism, with a quantum of asceticism, erected a creed—was "anything more than a not-ungraceful will-worship of pride." It is the haughty stoicism that the world has rejected. Very disappointing is it to find Arnold bidding farewell to a beloved son, who died in the first flush of manhood, not in the words of hope given to us by revelation, but in the phraseology of a heathen poet. "How fond you were of him," he wrote to the lad's grandmother, "and how I like to recall this! He looks beautiful, and my main feeling about him is, I am glad to say, what I

have put in one of my poems, the 'Fragment of Dejaneira':

> "But him on whom, in the prime
> Of life, with vigor undimmed,
> With unspent mind, and a soul
> Unworn, undebased, undecayed,
> Mournfully grating, the gates
> Of the city of death have forever closed—
> *Him*, I count *him*, well-starred."

There is no hope born of the new life of the soul that continues after death. With Goethe and with Arnold the injunction, "Ye must be born again," meant simply the attainment of increased perfection in this present life. "Which religion," asks Arnold in his "Progress,"

> Which has not taught weak wills how much they can?
> Which has not fall'n on the dry heart like rain?
> Which has not cried to sunk, self-weary man:
> *Thou must be born again!*

Surely none except the religion of Jesus, who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Arnold, the lover of lucidity, has estimated the German poet in lines of singular appositeness:

> When Goethe's death was told, we said:
> Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.
> Physician of the iron age,
> Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
> He took the suffering human race,
> He read each wound, each weakness clear,
> And struck his finger on the place,
> And said: *Thou ailest here, and here!*

He looked on Europe's dying hour
Of fitful dream and feverish power;
His eye plunged down the weltering strife—
The turmoil of expiring life—
He said: *The end is everywhere,*
Art still has truth, take refuge there!
And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below
His feet to see the lurid flow
Of terror, and insane distress,
And headlong fate, be happiness!

In these lines Arnold ascribes to Goethe the preëminent quality of lucidity: *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.* Skillful diagnosis, philosophical insight into the workings of the world—these qualities characterized him. But there he stops. If this can constitute happiness, then, says Arnold, Goethe had happiness; suggesting, however, at the same time, that this insight does *not* bring happiness. In the agonized prayer of his own Stagirius:

When the soul, growing clearer,
Sees God no nearer;
When the soul, mounting higher,
To God comes no nigher;
But the arch-fiend Pride
Mounts at her side,
Foiling her high emprise,
Sealing her eagle eyes, . . .
Save, O! save.

From the serene height of his own elevation, borne along in the current of an age that was full

of life and enthusiasm, the sage of Weimar never lost his buoyancy of temperament. His pupils, however, with less vitality and poorer nerves, found that his rule of life led to no such equable contemplation of life. Goethe's optimism was temperamental and accidental, rather than inherent in his philosophy of life.

In two respects may Goethe's teaching be pronounced unsatisfactory. His ideal of woman is not lofty enough; and the defect may in a measure be ascribed to a certain deliberate resolve on his own part never to risk shipwreck of fortune for a mere amatory passion. In Goethe's love affairs we fail to discover that ideal condition of things described by Tennyson, in which

> Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
> Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight.

The realization of perfection, so far as it can be obtained here, was his ideal—a pagan rather than a Christian conception. This threw him back on self, where a more ideal spirit would have risked the earthly shipwreck of self. For instance, in his love affair with Frederika there is undoubtedly an element of unsatisfactoriness in the cool way in which he left her just when the

claims of his own personality seemed to demand the severance of their relations. "He sighed as a lover, he obeyed as a man of the world"—to parody a saying of Gibbon's. This element of intellectual coldness, visible here and elsewhere in the story of Goethe's life, kept him indifferent on the subject of immortality. He believed that a few of the stronger and more select spirits might win immortality; but the question did not trouble him deeply. Now, immortality is a matter that cannot be solved entirely in terms of the reason; it is largely a question of the affections, in the highest sense of the term. With Plato, the eternal was symbolized by the heavenly Aphrodite, frequently referred to by Tennyson in "In Memoriam" as the "high Muse," or Urania. Goethe had worshiped the earthly Aphrodite in but a half-hearted fashion, and how could it be expected that her heavenly sister would reveal herself to him? "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Goethe's teaching was found lacking by Tennyson when he stood by the recent grave of his dearly loved friend. On one occasion Tennyson and his friend Edward Fitzgerald were gazing at the busts of Dante and Goethe in a shop window in Regent Street, London. "What," asked Fitzgerald, "is there wanting in Goethe

which the other has?" "The Divine," replied the poet-laureate.

In this rarefied atmosphere Arnold's notes are thin and unsatisfying. He devotes a lyric to Urania, but she figures as a *disdainful* goddess. Plato speaks of Urania in his Symposium, where she represents heavenly love as distinguished from mere earthly love. Milton confides himself to the guidance of Urania in one of his most impassioned passages:

> Up led by thee
> Into the heaven of heavens I have presumed,
> An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
> Thy tempering; with like safety guided down,
> Return me to my native element . . . .
> Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
> More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
> To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days,
> On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues;
> In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
> And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
> Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
> Purples the east; still govern thou my song,
> Urania, and fit audience find, though few.

With that timid reverence with which he approached sacred things, Tennyson introduces Urania as reproving his boldness in entering upon the domain of religion:

> Urania speaks with darkened brow:
> "Thou pratest here where thou art least·
> This faith has many a purer priest,
> And many an abler voice than thou.

But later on in "In Memoriam" the heavenly visitor speaks more encouragingly, as if touched with love and sympathy for his sorrow:

> The high Muse answered: "Wherefore grieve
> Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?
> Abide a little longer here,
> And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

But Arnold's Urania, or Heavenly Wisdom, is not an approachable personage, who stoops to soothe and bless ordinary mortals. She reserves all her smiles for some selecter being, better worthy of her favors:

> Eagerly once her gracious ken
> Was turned upon the sons of men;
> But light the serious visage grew—
> She looked, and smiled, and saw them through.

If she had only "seen them through" in the modern slang sense, as a helper and a kind friend, no one would have complained; but hers was a mere critical inspection that revealed their flaws:

> Our petty souls, our strutting wits,
> Our labored, puny passion-fits—
> Ah, may she scorn them still, till we
> Scorn them as bitterly as she!
>
> Yet show her once, ye heavenly Powers,
> One of some worthier race than ours!
> One for whose sake she once might prove
> How deeply she who scorns can love.
> . . . . . .
> And she to him will reach her hand,
> And gazing in his eyes will stand,
> And know her friend, and weep for glee,
> And cry: "Long, long I've looked for thee."

Then will she weep: with smiles, till then,
Coldly she mocks the sons of men;
Till then, her lovely eyes maintain
Their pure, unwavering, deep disdain.

This word "disdain," not a pleasant word, occurs in another of Arnold's lyrics—one of his finest—the "Obermann Once More." He is painting the meeting of triumphant, stern Rome with the grave Orient:

The brooding East with awe beheld
Her impious younger world.
The Roman tempest swelled and swelled,
And on her head was hurled.

The East bowed low before the blast
In patient, deep disdain;
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.

So well she mused, a morning broke
Across her spirit gray,
A conquering, newborn joy awoke,
And filled her life with day.

"Poor world," she cried, "so deep accurst!
That runn'st from pole to pole
To seek a draught to slake thy thirst—
Go, seek it in thy soul!"

She heard it, the victorious West,
In crown and sword arrayed!
She felt the void which mined her breast,
She shivered and obeyed.

This is bad psychology and bad history. So far from "disdaining" the might of armies, the

Oriental has ever been prone to worship and glorify Power. "Disdain" of a dreamer, on the one hand, "shivering" disillusion on the other, do not interpret the situation. The first, the Disdain, must be changed into warm, expansive Love, fruitful in all helpful, patient deeds, which is more powerful than armies; the second, the shivering disillusion, into the heartful recognition of this fuller humanity, the hearty acceptance of the new life offered to man by the divine Friend.

The master and teacher of both Goethe and Arnold in their final attitude to the physical world was the Jewish philosopher, Benedict Spinoza. "The two things," remarks Arnold in his "Spinoza and the Bible," "which are most remarkable about him [Spinoza], and by which, as I think, he chiefly impressed Goethe, seem to me not to come from his Hebrew nature at all—I mean his denial of final causes and his stoicism, not passive, but active. For a mind like Goethe's —a mind profoundly impartial and passionately aspiring after the science, not of men only, but of universal nature—the popular philosophy which explains all things by reference to man and regards universal nature as existing for the sake of man, and even of certain classes of men, was utterly repulsive. Unchecked, this philosophy would gladly maintain that the donkey exists in

order that the invalid Christian may have donkey's milk before breakfast; and such views of nature as this were exactly what Goethe's whole soul abhorred. Creation, he thought, should be made of sterner stuff; he desired to rest the donkey's existence on larger grounds."

Arnold then goes on to quote some distinctive passages from Spinoza's writings which outline his standpoint: "God directs nature according to the universal laws of nature, but not according as the particular laws of human nature require; and so God has regard, not of the human race only, but of entire nature." Does not this level a direct blow at the Puritan conception of God's dealings with Adam, Noah, and his chosen people? Then follows a statement revealing Spinoza's stoicism: "Our desire is not that nature may obey us, but, on the contrary, that we may obey nature."

"Here," remarks Arnold, "is the second source of Spinoza's attractiveness for Goethe, and a whole order of minds like him; he first impresses him, and then composes him. Filling and satisfying his imagination by the width and grandeur of his own view of nature, the Jewish thinker then fortifies and stills his mobile, straining, passionate temperament by the moral lesson he draws from his view of nature."

In his "Saint Paul and Protestantism" Arnold loses his complete sympathy with the man of Tarsus when the latter "Hebraizes" and "Judaizes"; which Spinoza is careful not to do —he keeps within the field common to philosophy, literature, and natural religion. A combination of Paul and Spinoza would have pleased Arnold entirely. Spinoza conceives of religious things in terms that are too intellectual, "crowning the intellectual life with a sacred transport." Goethe so conceived of them and so did Arnold, making abstractions out of life. The close of Arnold's "Spinoza and the Bible" is well worth quoting as summing up his final attitude toward this modern Plato, as he calls him: "One may say to the wise and devout Christian, 'Spinoza's conception of beatitude is not yours and cannot satisfy you, but whose conception of beatitude would you accept as satisfying? Not even that of the devoutest of your fellow Christians. Fra Angelico, the sweetest and most inspired of devout souls, has given us, in his great picture of the Last Judgment, his conception of beatitude. The elect are going round in a ring on long grass under laden fruit-trees; two of them, more restless than the others, are flying up a battlemented street—a street blank with all the ennui of the Middle Ages. Across a gulf is visible,

for the delectation of the saints, a blazing caldron in which Beelzebub is sousing the damned. This is hardly more your conception of beatitude than Spinoza's is. But "in my Father's house are many mansions"; only, to reach any one of these mansions, there are needed the wings of a genuine sacred transport, of an "immortal longing."' These wings Spinoza had; and because he had them his own language about himself, about his aspirations and his course, is true: his foot is in the *vera vita*, his eye on the beatific vision."

In these closing passages in "Spinoza and the Bible" Arnold speaks as if he himself were distinctly in the Christian fold; where he always was by inclination and training, but from which he often seems to draw aside by a kind of intellectual overscrupulousness. He strove to realize two visions that are quite incompatible.

Another German thinker, a predecessor of Goethe's, enters directly into Arnold's poetry—the Saxon Lessing. To him Arnold devotes a poem which is but little noticed or quoted, his "Epilogue to Lessing's Laocoön." And yet in some respects the poem is equally significant to us with Browning's "Abt Vogler," in that it propounds and answers a question in the sphere of the higher æsthetics, where the domain of æsthetics touches that of religion. Browning gives music

a final preëminence over the other arts because it is not subject to analysis:

> But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
> Existent behind all laws, that made them, and lo! they are.

Arnold discusses in his verses the question why poetry so often fails of its mission when music and art triumphantly succeed. He never allows it to be doubted that poetry is the highest of all arts; he merely wonders why first-rate poetry is so rare, and tries to furnish a satisfactory answer.

Arnold is not a devotee of music, as was Browning, and is never warmed by its inspiration like his contemporary. Music, after all, has but a slight hold upon conduct, and is singularly unsatisfying on the moral side. For Browning's artistic ends its symbolic use in "Abt Vogler" is justified, and is appropriate; but, finally speaking, music must rank below poetry; and Arnold is right in so classing it.

To Arnold, Lessing was no mean prophet. In the story of Germany he comes next after Luther as an apostle of truth. While Luther was the master spirit of the great religious upheaval of the sixteenth century, Lessing was the chief light in the intellectual revival of the eighteenth, known as the period of Illuminism. Arnold was not

exceedingly fond of Luther, whose frequent lack of "dignity and distinction" displeased the fastidious Englishman. Even as a final exponent of God's eternal truths he has declared that Luther was equaled or surpassed by the old Greeks; and his *Gemeinheit*, or commonness, prepared the way for no outburst of literature to elevate humanity. The two hundred years of German life after Luther's death, save for a few inspired hymns, are almost barren of any literary production of value.

But Lessing's mission was fruitful in results. When poetry was regarded as something merely didactic or fanciful, he asserted for it a high and dignified role as a final interpreter of life. Before Lessing's time the critical world was in a misty fog of verbiage and mere tradition, but with his labors we get into "the bright and populous thoroughfare of human life which binds the ages together." Yet Lessing left one question unanswered which supplies material for Arnold's poem:

> "Ah," cries my friend, "but who hath taught
> Why music and the other arts
> Oftener perform aright their parts
> Than poetry? why she, than they,
> Fewer fine successes can display?"

In reply Arnold admits that Pausanias found, when traveling in Greece—the highly gifted land—

that good poems were rarer than good statues. In mediæval Italy, which produced Dante, Tasso, Petrarch, and Ariosto, painting seemed to lead the way with Raphael and his brotherhood:

> And nobly perfect, in our day
> Of haste, half-work, and disarray,
> Profound yet touching, sweet yet strong,
> Hath risen Goethe's, Wordsworth's song;
> Yet even I (and none will bow
> Deeper to these) must needs allow,
> They yield us not, to soothe our pains,
> Such multitude of heavenly strains
> As from the kings of sound are blown—
> Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn.

As his friend and he passed along through Hyde Park in London (where the conversation is represented as having occurred) they looked upon the green grass, the bright elm trees, the restful kine:

> "Behold," I said, "the painter's sphere!
> The limits of his art appear.
> The passing group, the summer morn,
> The grass, the elms, that blossomed thorn—
> Those cattle couched, or, as they rise,
> Their shining flanks, their liquid eyes—
> These, or much greater things, but caught
> Like these, and in one aspect brought!
> In outward semblance he must give
> A moment's life of things that live;
> Then let him choose his moment well,
> With power divine its story tell."

Their walk brings them in sight of Westminster Abbey, and the rustling breeze seems to

whisper to their ears the charmed tones of sacred music:

> "*Miserere, Domine!*"
> The words are uttered, and they flee.
> Deep is their penitential moan,
> Mighty their pathos, but 'tis gone.
> They have declared the spirit's sore,
> Sore load, and words can do no more.
> Beethoven takes them then—these two
> Poor, bounded words—and makes them new;
> Infinite makes them, makes them young;
> Transplants them to another tongue,
> Where they can now, without constraint,
> Pour all the soul of their complaint,
> And roll adown a channel large
> The wealth divine they have in charge.
> Page after page of music turn,
> And still they live, and still they burn,
> Eternal, passion-fraught, and free—
> "*Miserere, Domine!*"

So much for the mission of music. The scene then changes to the busy throng of Rotten Row, and the two inquirers gaze upon humanity in movement:

> The young, the happy, and the fair,
> The old, the sad, the worn, were there;
> Some vacant and some musing went,
> And some in talk and merriment.
> Nods, smiles, and greetings, and farewells!
> And now and then, perhaps, there swells
> A sigh, a tear—but in the throng
> All changes fast, and hies along.
> Hies, ah! from whence, what native ground?
> And to what goal, what ending, bound?
> "Behold at last the poet's sphere!
> But who," I said, "suffices here?"

The question as propounded by Arnold would seem to demand an answer in terms of religion; but he limits himself wholly to the domain of art, and replies as a pure humanist. The task he speaks of is not one for the moralist, but for the supreme artist—the gifted personage who can reveal to his audience not only the aspect of the moment, like a painter, and the feeling of the moment, like the musician, but also life's movement:

> The movement he must tell of life,
> Its pain and pleasure, rest and strife;
> His eye must travel down, at full,
> The long, unpausing spectacle;
> With faithful, unrelaxing force
> Attend it from its primal source,
> From change to change and year to year
> Attend it of its mid-career,
> Attend it to the last repose
> And solemn silence of its close.

According to Arnold, most poets who apply themselves to this task of mirroring life—how fond he is of that word "mirror"!—are ill endowed for the task, and some show feebleness and intellectual embarrassment. All they get out of life's majestic river is a momentary gleam, and they give us mere snatches of song.

There are, however, two figures which tower above the rest of the crowd and speak with power

and pathos far surpassing the message of any painter or musician:

> Becthoven, Raphael, cannot reach
> The charm which Homer, Shakespeare, teach.
> To these, to these, their thankful race
> Gives, then, the first, the fairest place;
> And brightest is their glory's sheen,
> For greatest hath their labor been.

Arnold here seems to speak the language of exaggeration, and to place Homer and Shakespeare upon an undeserved pinnacle. It must be remembered that Shakespeare was dumb on one deep and essential topic, that of religion. He is a pure humanist, and in certain essential respects limits the scope of his inquiries into the meaning and drift of life. He can hardly be said to have given us a hero; and to speak of his breathing "immortal air"—an expression Arnold makes use of in another passage—is to employ more than equivocal language:

> Deeply the poet feels; but he
> Breathes, when he will, immortal air,
> Where Orpheus and where Homer are.

The poet, he declares in "Resignation," is "more than man":

> In the day's life, whose iron round
> Hems us all in, he is not bound;
> He leaves his kind, o'erleaps their pen,
> And flees the common life of men.

And yet, notwithstanding his almost idolatrous sonnet to Shakespeare, Arnold reckoned him lower than his idolized Homer; the modern poet was as imperfection to perfection. Here is the sonnet:

SHAKESPEARE

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask. Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foiled searcher of mortality;

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honored, self-secure,
Didst tread on earth unguessed at.—Better so!

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

This language implies a deification of humanity after the fashion of Auguste Comte. It is modern Illuminism in its antichristian aspect, demanding a new definition for the terms "immortal" and "immortality" such as is accorded them by modern savants. When they bid an eternal farewell to dead friends, beside graves unblest by Christian rites that bespeak the Christian hope of immortality, their panegyrics contain aspirations after this mundane form of immortality. It may be defined from this "Epilogue to Lessing's

Laocoön" as the power to charm humanity forever:

> They speak! the happiness divine
> They feel runs o'er in every line;
> Its spell is round them like a shower—
> It gives them pathos, gives them power.
> No painter yet hath such a way,
> Nor no musician made, as they,
> And gathered on immortal knolls
> Such lovely flowers for cheering souls.

If the words "immortal" and "divine" are keywords to the interpretation of the essence of Christ's message to man, then they are used here with a significance that is entirely neopagan and useless for theology.

CHAPTER II

ARNOLD AND FRENCH THOUGHT

MATTHEW ARNOLD loved France and Frenchmen. The fair mistress to whom are addressed his early love lays was Marguerite, a Swiss maiden who spoke the soft, smooth accents of the people dwelling by the Seine. His "A Memory-Picture" is laid in Switzerland; so is his "Dream":

> We shot beneath the cottage with the stream.
> On the brown, rude-carved balcony, two forms
> Came forth—Olivia's, Marguerite! and thine.
> Clad were they both in white, flowers in their breast;
> Straw hats bedecked their heads, with ribbons blue,
> Which danced, and on their shoulders, fluttering,
> played.
> They saw us, they conferred; their bosoms heaved,
> And more than mortal impulse filled their eyes.
> Their lips moved; their white arms, waved eagerly,
> Flashed once, like falling streams; we rose, we gazed;
> One moment, on the rapid's top, our boat
> Hung poised—and then the darting river of Life
> (Such now, methought, it was), the river of Life,
> Loud thundering, bore us by; swift, swift it foamed,
> Black under cliffs it raced, round headlands shone.
> Soon the planked cottage 'mid the sun-warmed pines
> Faded—the moss—the rocks; us burning plains,
> Bristled with cities—us the sea received.

Here is his old-world conception of the sea as something cruel and ingulfing which separates

mortals and keeps them apart. "Time's barren, stormy flow" he calls it in another of the Marguerite poems, which contains two of his finest quatrains:

> This is the curse of life! that not
> A nobler, calmer train
> Of wiser thoughts and feelings blot
> Our passions from our brain.
>
> But each day brings its petty dust
> Our soon-choked souls to fill,
> And we forget because we must,
> And not because we will.

But yet, interesting as are the Marguerite poems to readers of Arnold, Switzerland and the way thither through sunny France are less associated with them than with the Obermann poems. Obermann was a philosopher with a certain outlook on life which fascinated Arnold. There is an element of gay capriciousness in Arnold's whole life and method which makes us feel that he certainly saw life vividly, yet he failed to "see life steadily and see it whole." When he visited the Grande Chartreuse,

> Through Alpine meadows soft-suffused
> With rain, where thick the crocus blows,

and felt its "gloom profound"; and, among Alpine peaks,

Watched the rosy light
Fade from the distant peaks of snow;
And on the air of night

Heard accents of the eternal tongue
Through the pine branches play—

he was under the spell of this skeptical, melancholy Obermann, who inhabited a mountain chalet in these retired haunts. A casual reader of his pages would suppose that Senancour, the creator of "Obermann," was a representative Frenchman of the period, whose musings upon life and destiny satisfied the intellectual cravings of the time. But this is not the case, notwithstanding George Sand's rhetoric. Sainte-Beuve, the great French critic, for whom Arnold had an unbounded respect, discusses at length, in the numerous volumes of his Causeries de Lundi, literary personages and literary influences, yet he refers only twice to the author of "Obermann." In each case it is to contrast him, and not overfavorably, with some other nature-lover. In his detailed account of Töpffer, for instance, a highly accomplished writer who died in his prime, in 1846, when fame was just coming to him, Sainte-Beuve quotes his description of the valley of Cervin, remarking on the magnificent sweep and exactness of the passage. I translate the closing half: "Lower down productiveness, change,

renewal surround us; the active and fruitful soil clothes itself eternally with raiment or with flowers, and God seems to bring his hand near to us that we may take from it the food of summer and the provisions of winter. But here, where that hand seems to be withdrawn, deep down in the heart we experience new impressions of abandonment and terror; we recognize in its nakedness, so to speak, the utter weakness of man, his speedy and final destruction, if, but for an instant, the divine goodness failed to surround him with tender cares and infinite succors. Mute but powerful poetry, which, from the very fact that it turns the thought toward the grand mysteries of creation, seizes the soul and uplifts it! So, while the habitual spectacle of the divine bounty is apt to make us forget God, the chance spectacle of immense sterilities, of gloomy deserts, of regions without life, without succor, without bounties, draws us Godward by a lively feeling of gratitude; so that more than one man who forgot God in the plains has remembered him among the mountains." At such times, says Sainte-Beuve, Töpffer's reflections carry us back to the awful glory of ancient Sinai, the descriptions of the prophets, and all that appeals to man in biblical story; while "the same spectacle raises far other thoughts in the minds of men like Senancour, another famous

nature-lover; they see therein only the culmination and underlying witness of blind forces, and, even when most admiring, get nothing out of it but sadness, horror, and desolation." He also contrasts Senancour's attitude elsewhere with that of a lover of nature's moods, like Ramond, who was at once geologist, botanist, and physicist. Where Senancour merely gets a new ecstatic thrill which leaves behind a sensation of blankness, Ramond finds something to call forth admiration and enthusiasm. Sainte-Beuve seems to have preferred Arnold's interpretation of Obermann to the original, for he translated the English poet's verses into excellent French equivalents.

In his first set of "Stanzas in Memory of the Author of Obermann" Arnold compares the Frenchman's teaching with that of Wordsworth and of Goethe:

> Yet, of the spirits who have reigned
> In this our troubled day,
> I know but two who have attained,
> Save thee, to see their way.
> . . . . . .
> But Wordsworth's eyes avert their ken
> From half of human fate;
> And Goethe's course few sons of men
> May think to emulate.
> . . . . . .
> Too fast we live, too much are tried,
> Too harassed, to attain
> Wordsworth's sweet calm, or Goethe's wide
> And luminous view to gain.

And then we turn, thou sadder sage,
To thee! we feel thy spell!
—The hopeless tangle of our age,
Thou too hast scanned it well.

Immovable thou sittest, still
As death, composed to bear!
Thy head is clear, thy feeling chill,
And icy thy despair.

Yes, as the son of Thetis said,
I hear thee saying now:
Greater by far than thou are dead;
Strive not! die also thou!
. . . . . .
Away, the dreams that but deceive!
And thou, sad guide, adieu!
I go, fate drives me; but I leave
Half of my life with you.

We, in some unknown Power's employ,
Move in a rigorous line;
Can neither, when we will, enjoy,
Nor, when we will, resign.

This is surely the philosophy of despair and disillusion, from which all warmth and vital humanity has departed. Is this "seeing one's way"? Better the attitude of Newman, with its prayerfulness:

Keep thou my feet! I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

There is no prayer in Obermann's attitude; and Arnold's own conception of prayer is thin and faulty: an energy of aspiration toward the Eternal Not-ourselves that makes for righteousness.

"Nothing," he remarks, "can be more efficacious, more right and more real than this." He quotes with approval Margaret Fuller's words: "Cultivate the spirit of prayer. I do not mean agitation and excitement, but a deep desire for truth, purity, and goodness."

Senancour, the author of "Obermann," lived in a time of depression and disillusion among thinking men in France, when Napoleon Bonaparte was riding roughshod over the prostrate forms of French ideologues and idealists. Enthusiasts who had for a time warmed to a religion of humanity felt their temperature grow cold and chill.

Etienne Pivert de Senancour was really a belated French *philosophe.* Born in the reign of Louis XV, he found himself a ruined man at the Revolution; and for some years he lived quietly in Switzerland, where he married. His Obermann letters, which show the sentimental influence of Rousseau, were published in the year 1804, and attracted considerable notice and admiration. Obermann has the philosophic melancholy of a Hamlet, a Werther, or a Childe Harold, and has been compared with Goethe's and Byron's heroes by George Sand, who held the book in high esteem. She compares Obermann to a wild bird on the cliffs, deprived of the use of his wings, who gazes upon shores whence sail happy vessels, and on

which only wrecks are cast. It is the old, unhappy view of the ocean which the true modern rejects, but to which Arnold, with his belated classical leanings, still clings. Every lover of Arnold remembers the lines to Marguerite, beginning,

> Yes, in the sea of life enisled,
> With echoing straits between us thrown,
> Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
> We mortals live *alone*,

and ending,

> A God, a God their severance ruled!
> And bade betwixt their souls to be
> The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

To the ancient world the sea meant warfare, trouble, disaster; only God could master it: "Or who," says the Eternal to Job, "who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth; and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" In the same book it is spoken of as a raging monster or dragon; the sacred poet herein following the nature myth in which the stormy sea, assaulting the heavens with its billows, was an embodiment of lawlessness and evil, a rebel leading his hosts against the Almighty. Thus the opening verses of the forty-sixth psalm do not refer to an actual sea: "Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the

swelling thereof." It is the stormy maelstrom of the nation which the psalmist depicts. We have the same trope in the seventeenth chapter of the book of Revelation: "The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." And when the seer declared that "there shall be no more sea" he foretold an endless period of calm and bliss.

When they refer to the sea Byron speaks like an ancient and Keats like a modern. In an impassioned passage in "Fifine at the Fair" Browning throws contempt upon Byron for his attitude toward the ocean in the celebrated apostrophe in "Childe Harold":

> [Thou] send'st him, shivering in the playful spray
> And howling, to his gods, where haply lies
> His petty hope in some near port or bay,
> And dashest him to earth again:—there let him lay.

Browning rightly characterizes this as an unworthy conception, expressed in blundering English. But Keats rises to the occasion, as a true modern who loves the ocean, in one of his finest sonnets:

> Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art.
> Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,
> And watching with eternal lids apart,
> Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
> The moving waters at their priestlike task
> Of pure ablution round earth's human shores.

Oddly enough, in one of his Essays—that on Maurice de Guérin—Arnold, quoting from this sonnet of Keats, makes a serious and significant blunder. He has been comparing religion with science, to the detriment of the latter. "The interpretations of science," he declares, "do not give us this intimate sense of objects as the interpretations of poetry give it; they appeal to a limited faculty, and not to the whole man. It is not Linnæus, or Cavendish, or Cuvier who gives us the true sense of animals, or water, or plants, who seizes their secret for us, who makes us participate in their life; it is Shakespeare, with his

> daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty;

it is Wordsworth, with his

> voice . . . heard
> In springtime from the cuckoo-bird,
> Breaking the silence of the seas
> Among the farthest Hebrides;

it is Keats, with his

> moving waters at their priestlike task
> Of cold [sic!] ablution round earth's human shores;

it is Chateaubriand, with his *cîme indéterminée des forêts;* it is Senancour, with his mountain birch-tree: *Cette écorce blanche, lisse et crevassée; cette*

tige agreste; ces branches qui s'inclinent vers la terre; la mobilité des feuilles, et tout cet abandon, simplicité de la nature, attitude des déserts."

The blundering substitution of "cold" for "pure" makes a vital difference in the whole conception. With the phraseology of Keats both nature and humanity seem to acquire a new dignity; the ocean is pictured as a kindly, helpful attendant, like a sweet-faced nurse at a well-appointed hospital. Arnold's adjective "cold" spoils the whole warm and peaceful effect. The mistake is due to a radically defective attitude toward the triumphs of modern science. In the past century man has gained dominion over the sea in a wonderful way, so that he is no longer afraid of it as in the old days when he pictured it as a dragon or demon. In these days, with due precautions, it is as safe to live upon the ocean as upon dry land. Some wealthy people are actually known to live on a favorite ocean liner plying between New York and Southampton. The sea is no longer a divider but a unifier. When the Panama Canal is completed San Francisco will be much closer than before to New York. And then how much has science done to make us understand the health-giving functions of the sea! its ozone-laden breezes; its ability to cool and temper a whole coast, like that extending from Puget

Sound to San Diego, or, by its Gulf Stream, to make the shores of Ireland and North Britain habitable.

Keats rises to the occasion, and characterizes the ocean as God's ambassador and minister—a priest—performing a divine task. With a strangely blind conservatism Arnold misses the whole point and presents a picture that jars us and makes us shiver. He allowed his old-world proclivities to master him and to deaden his poetic insight. Neopaganism like this has no message for modern humanity.

His great contemporary, the poet-laureate, does not fail in this respect. Tennyson is friendly to the sea, regarding it as a mighty influence beneficent to man. In "In Memoriam" he makes the ocean a friend who soothes:

> The salt sea-water passes by,
> And hushes half the babbling Wye,
> And makes a silence in the hills.

And in "Enoch Arden" the poet speaks of the sea and land as friends—"a roar of the sea when he welcomes the land." Even in "Self-Dependence," where Arnold draws nearer to the sea, he links it to the stars in a subordinate way, and makes it typical of isolation. The stars and the sea, he declares,

Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see.

How unlike Keats's "priestlike task," or the "modern chemistry" recognition of the ozone-filled ocean as a great physician and healer!

"He who is man," remarks Obermann in one of his letters, "knows how to love without forgetting that *love is but an accident of life.*" This is the root fallacy of his whole outlook. What strikes one in reading his pages is the aloofness, the absence of other personalities in his life, dominating him, or being dominated by him. He gives an outline of his spiritual career in another letter. When he left childhood behind, the period that we all regret, he imagined that he felt real life; but he found only "fantastic sensations." He looked on beings, and they were only shadows; he longed for harmony, and found only contraries. Then he waxed gloomy, and his

heart grew hollow; with unlimited desires, he felt the ennui of life come upon him just when man usually begins to live. For a time his restless spirit found relief and solace among the Alps; the silence and beauty of the lakes and forests seemed to realize the longed-for perfection. He "heard the sound of another world." But a return to the humdrum routine of earth disabused him again, ridding him of his "blind faith." He could see naught but endless changes, purposeless actions, universal impenetrability, in this world which we occupy. "Our dreams vanish, and what replaces them? Power wearies; pleasure slips from our grasp; glory is for our ashes; religion is a system for the unhappy. Love had the colors of life; but the shadow comes, the rose pales and falls to earth, and behold eternal night!"

This is not healthy sentiment, nor sound philosophy, but the morbidity of a sick personality, requiring sustenance and stimulus from other personalities. The word "ennui," ever recurring, has no place in the record of a wholesome, well-ordered life. All life is indeed change; but, in wholesome life, all change has a definite purpose. In loving and caring for others we penetrate their hearts and discover the real meaning of life.

Senancour's Obermann was inherently a sentimentalist who spent his days in dreams that came

to nothing, in tracing out wishes that could never be fulfilled. A call to real activity, the infusion of some moral vitality, might, thinks George Sand, have converted him into a saint. With his incisive Voltairean philosophy, his fondness for elegiac moods, his literary perfection of phrase, he exercised a fascinating but unhappy influence upon Arnold. College and school life—the life that Arnold lived—is almost as artificial as that of a convent. The dreams and enthusiasms of youths and maidens take a literary and ineffective shape, and their sorrows are euthanasiac and morbid. The very term "academic" has in practical life something of the capricious and unpractical. The pages of "Obermann" are excellent pasture for the budding essayist who wants to do a finished thing in literary work; but the exquisite psychological diagnosis is not to be regarded as more than mildly helpful in any virile discussion of modern social, philosophical, and theological problems.

A later deliverance, in prose, would seem to show that Arnold was fully alive to the singularly negative aspect of Senancour's whole teaching. The passage is to be found in his "Discourses in America," where he is dealing with Emerson. He quotes a letter from Emerson to Carlyle, wherein the writer confesses that the "strong hours con-

quer him," and that he is the victim of miscellany; miscellany of designs, vast debility, and procrastination. "The forlorn note belonging to the phrase 'vast debility,'" adds Arnold, "recalls that saddest and most discouraged of writers, the author of 'Obermann,' Senancour,[1] with whom Emerson has in truth a certain kinship. He has, in common with Senancour, his pureness, his passion for nature, his single eye; and here we find him confessing, like Senancour, a sense in himself of sterility and impotence."

Arnold may be considered, then, as treating Obermann somewhat in the manner of a bitter-sweet tonic, a wholesome alterative. Personally, his mood was optimistic, and he had a surplus of gladness; as one critic remarks, Arnold's pessimism was not of the feelings but of the understanding. His real sympathies would probably have allied him to the more hopeful and radiant French school of *Idées-Forces*, known among English thinkers as Pragmatists. These philosophers regard the whole world as moving to perfection on the basis of conduct. They carry out Arnold's quaint dictum, "Conduct is three fourths of life," into a systematic philosophy, and teach that to be is to act; that the whole of life is in the

[1] The spelling "Senancour," found throughout the authorized edition of Arnold's works, has been followed; the actual French form is "Sénancour." —Author's Note.

present; and that the meaning and reason of the "all-assuming years" are to be found in the potency of to-day. Their ethical system may be defined as moral opportunism; for it has no stay on a personal God, who has willed things, is willing things, and will call upon his creatures, some day, to give an account of their stewardship, as responsible to him.

CHAPTER III

ARNOLD AND WORDSWORTH AS RELIGIOUS TEACHERS

It is impossible to understand or appreciate Arnold fully unless we are acquainted with the best work of his predecessor and master, William Wordsworth. One of the most profoundly significant events in the life of the great poet was when he received the doctor's degree at the Oxford Commemoration of 1839, amid unusual plaudits. For, a quarter of a century before, Wordsworth had been scorned as a poetaster and literary crank. To none must the appreciation have come with greater delight than to the Arnolds, father and son, who were sworn admirers of the modern prophet of natural religion. It was an act of national approval and confidence.

So much of the best in the religious life of paganism did Arnold find in Wordsworth that this particular aspect of Wordsworthianism bulks too largely in his estimate of the poet's teaching. In his essay on Marcus Aurelius, a man whose pure and noble character seemed to him—as it has done to others, John Wesley among the number—to reach a very pinnacle of greatness, he finds in

the emperor's outlook on life much to remind him of Wordsworth's teachings. Remarking on the admixture of sweetness with dignity which makes the Roman so beautiful a moralist, Arnold declares that it enables him to carry even into his observation of nature a delicate penetration, a sympathetic tenderness, worthy of Wordsworth. The spirit of such a remark as the following has hardly a parallel, he thinks, in the whole range of Greek and Roman literature:

> Figs, when they are quite ripe, gape open; and in the ripe olives the very circumstance of their being near to rottenness adds a peculiar beauty to the fruit. And the ears of corn bending down, and the lion's eyebrows and the foam which flows from the mouth of the wild boars, and many other things—though they are far from being beautiful, in a certain sense—still, because they come in the course of nature, have a beauty in them, and they please the mind; so that if a man should have a feeling and a deeper insight with respect to the things which are produced in the universe, there is hardly anything which comes in the course of nature which will not seem to him to be in a manner disposed so as to give him pleasure.

"But it is when his strain passes to directly moral subjects," declares Arnold, "that his delicacy and sweetness lend to it the greatest charm."

The other teachers of antiquity whom Arnold would raise to a level with modern Christian poets at their best are Simonides, Pindar, Æschylus, and Sophocles, who lived in a time when it seemed to him that "poetry made the noblest, the most

successful effort she has ever made as the priestess of the imaginative reason, of the element by which the modern spirit, if it would live right, has chiefly to live."

Matthew Arnold knew and loved the poets of ancient Greece in an intimate and first-hand way, and his tribute to their greatness is not a conventional or artificial one; he *felt* their power and nobility. On the other hand, his associations with Wordsworth were singularly close and friendly, and merit a passing notice before proceeding to further discussion.

The Arnolds became immediate neighbors of Wordsworth when Matthew was a lad of ten, and his holidays were spent in the beautiful lake country surrounding Rydal. Rugby, their other home, lies in a flat and uninteresting district, and the good Doctor was glad to retire for health and inspiration to the mountain slopes of Westmoreland and Cumberland. "I could still rave about Rydal," he says in one of his letters to an old college friend; "it was a period of five weeks of almost awful happiness, absolutely without a cloud; and we all enjoyed it, I think, equally—mother, father, and fry. Our intercourse with the Wordsworths was one of the brightest spots of all; nothing could exceed their friendliness—and my almost daily walks with him were things not to

be forgotten. . . . We were thinking of buying or renting a place at Grasmere or Rydal, to spend our holidays at constantly; for not only are the Wordsworths and the scenery a very great attraction, but as I had the chapel at Rydal all the time of our last visit I got acquainted with the poorer people besides."

Matthew was the largest of the "fry," and was drinking in everything, no doubt. Next New Year's Day the father writes: "New Year's Day is in this part of the country regarded as a great festival, and we have had prayers this morning even in our village chapel at Rydal. May God bless us in all our doings in the year that is now begun, and make us increase more and more in the knowledge and love of himself and of his Son; that it may be blessed to us, whether we live to see the end of it on earth or no." This was the simple Christian assurance of Thomas Arnold, shared by his friend William Wordsworth, that the life on earth is continued in heaven. How far his son was to travel from this "illusion" it is my purpose in this chapter to show.

Before the year was out the Arnolds were established in a house of their own which became associated with their name. "The Wordsworths' friendship, for so I may call it," writes Dr. Arnold to a pupil, "is certainly one of the greatest

delights of Fox How—the name of my place—and their kindness in arranging everything in our absence has been very great." And references recur later in his letters testifying to his intimate friendship with the great poet.

The son, then, grew up among Lake School associations, and essentially in sympathy with the great exponent of its principles. In political matters, it is true, the somewhat ironbound conservatism of Wordsworth was directly opposed to the liberalism of the two Arnolds. But their ideals of conduct and of life were in harmony; they respected and revered the pure and sacred traditions of the English home and family.

When Wordsworth died, in 1850, Matthew Arnold seized the occasion to write "Memorial Verses," in which he contrasted the dead poet with Goethe and Byron, not to his disadvantage. "Time," he declared, "may restore us in his course the sage mind of Goethe and the force of Byron; but where will a later Europe again find the healing power of Wordsworth?" Here is his appreciation:

> And Wordsworth!—Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice!
> For never has such soothing voice
> Been to your shadowy world conveyed
> Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade
> Heard the clear song of Orpheus come
> Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.

Wordsworth has gone from us—and ye,
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!
He too upon a wintry clime
Had fallen—on this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery path of earth:
Smiles broke from us and we had ease;
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sunlit fields again;
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth returned; for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely furled,
The freshness of the early world.

These lines have received, and justly, great praise. But are they an adequate appreciation? Is Arnold justified in eliminating the Christian element in Wordsworth, and confining his vocabulary and references entirely to what is pagan? Surely Wordsworth's best work was distinctly Christian. Let us compare this appreciation with that of the Quaker poet:

WHITTIER ON WORDSWORTH

Dear friends who read the world aright—
And in its common forms discern
A beauty and a harmony
The many never learn!

Kindred in soul of him who found
In simple flower and leaf and stone
The impulse of the sweetest lays
Our Saxon tongue has known—

Accept this record of a life
  As sweet and pure, as calm and good,
As a long day of blandest June
  In green field and in wood.

How welcome to our ears, long pained
  By strife of sect and party noise,
The brooklike murmur of his song
  Of nature's simple joys!

The violet by its mossy stone,
  The primrose by the river's brim,
And chance-sown daffodil have found
  Immortal life through him.

The sunrise on his breezy lake,
  The rosy tints his sunset brought,
World-seen, are gladdening all the vales
  And mountain peaks of thought.

Art builds on sand; the works of pride
  And human passion change and fall;
But that which shares the life of God
  With him surviveth all.

A close comparison of these studies will, I think, reveal the fact that Whittier gives us more of the atmosphere of Wordsworth than does Arnold—leaving questions of poetical excellence apart. Arnold recognizes in the poet a physician of the soul who for the time being made life more worth living; one who brought back the Greek delight in the outer world and the forms of leaf and flower; who made the fields sunlit again. But is there not in this appreciation the defect noted by Arnold's own father — the mere artistic

attitude toward the world? Surely Wordsworth's message was not simply a lullaby which soothes a fretful child and makes him smile and forget. Did he shirk the darker problems of life and give no answer to its questions—merely "putting these things by"?

Wordsworth, according to Whittier, is enjoyed by the favored few who read the world *aright;* and this final word is characteristic of his whole outlook as distinguished from Arnold's; he read the world as it ought to be read by all who know and feel the truth. The Quaker poet claims for Wordsworth's teaching an essential rightness and final truth. Arnold's tribute is more æsthetic or artistic; it is fanciful and literary. It refers us to the song of Orpheus and the life of ancient Greece—to the "freshness of the earlier world." Whittier asserts far more than Arnold; he dwells on the final harmony which Wordsworth revealed not only in his poetry but in his life. This was a gift to the world, conferred upon it not by a mere artist but by a believer and a devotee who shared in God's life. Whittier ends his tribute with a reference to the personality of God and the presence in the world of the divine life. Wordsworth gave us, he asserts, not an anodyne, but spiritual food.

The lovers of Wordsworth find him at his best

in his "Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Childhood," the loftiest strain the poet ever uttered. Here we have the "full, the perfect Wordsworth, . . . informed and chastened by an intense sense of human conduct, of reverence and almost of humbleness, displayed in the utmost poetic felicity." When Wordsworth spoke of finding strength

> In the soothing thoughts that spring
> Out of human suffering,
> In the faith that looks through death,

he was not using mere phrases for the purposes of artistic effect; he spoke as a believer. He considered, and rightly, that the hope of immortality was the sheet anchor of our faith. The sixth book of his "Excursion" describes a typical village pastor who ministers faithfully to his flock:

> Exalting tender themes, by just degrees
> To lofty raised; and to the highest, last;
> The head and mighty paramount of truths—
> Immortal life in never-fading worlds,
> For mortal creatures, conquered and secured.

To Arnold, Wordsworth seemed often inspired in the most direct way. "Nature herself seems," he remarks in his essay on Wordsworth, "to take the pen out of his hand, and to write for him with her own bare, sheer, penetrating power. This arises from two causes: from the profound sin-

cereness with which Wordsworth feels his subject, and also from the profoundly sincere and natural character of his subject itself." And yet he had but a qualified admiration for the great Ode, as "not wholly free from something declamatory," this poem which Professor Saintsbury, in a passage just quoted, terms the expression of "the full and perfect Wordsworth." It seemed to Arnold to be based on an "illusion," the illusion of immortality. A few words on illusions.

It is astonishing how frequently this word "illusion" recurs in modern French ethical discussion, becoming, indeed, a kind of keyword. As interpreted by a certain school of thinkers, with whom Arnold was more or less in sympathy, the universe is material and eternal—the great solid fact. This material world throws off from it human beings who possess the wonderful power of contemplating it; but they pass away like the morning vapor. The only permanent thing these minds can do is to help other minds, present and to come, to contemplate the universe in the most lucid and serviceable way. On what principle? On the principle of getting most happiness or satisfaction out of it. What kind of happiness or satisfaction? The old Epicurean happiness of sense pleasures, as refined and prolonged as possible; or the old Stoic satisfaction

of will-worship, the satisfaction of having realized ourselves.

Listen to one French poet speaking of another —the gifted Gautier: "A noble poet is dead. Regrets? But what then is the death of a man but the vanishing of one of our dreams? Men, whom we believe real, are but the *triste opacité de leurs spectres futurs*. But the poet, beyond his vain physical existence, lives for us a high, imperishable life. The poet is a solemn agitation of words; the death of a poet purifies our fiction of him."

This means that human personality is inferior and subsidiary to the general ideas or utterances to which it gives birth and expression; that personalities are mere bubbles, so to speak, on the waters of time. It means that this physical existence is mere vanity and emptiness, an emanation of matter, and that its supremely useful result is to formulate ideas for the benefit of future ages. The horizon is the horizon of the world; the only theater of action and of interest is the stage of the world.

Arnold in his essay on Wordsworth, as we have seen, makes use of this keyword, "illusion;" declaring that Wordsworth's philosophy is illusion and unsound; that "the 'intimations' of the famous Ode, those corner stones of the supposed philo-

sophic system of Wordsworth, . . . have no real solidity." And yet, in the same essay, when comparing him with Théophile Gautier, he declares that Wordsworth surpasses the Frenchman because he deals with life so powerfully. Could Wordsworth have dealt powerfully with life if his doctrine had been illusory? Is this a tenable theory? Is it not rank heresy—the belief that truth can be reared on falsehood? *Ex falso falsum; ex vero verum.*

Arnold has no use for revivals, or for the platform and street-preacher's appeal. In the preface to his "Culture and Anarchy" he talks somewhat superciliously of "earnest young men conceiving of salvation in the old Puritan fashion, and flinging themselves ardently upon it in the old, false ways of this fashion, which we know so well, and such as Mr. Hammond, the American revivalist, has lately at Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle been refreshing our memory with." Compare this attitude of his with that of Wordsworth, writing seventy years before. When Wordsworth, whose "Peter Bell" was composed as early as 1798, introduced into the story a scene in a Methodist chapel he was writing as an outsider and a literary man whose object was to interpret life. Methodist preachers were then the butt of ordinary men of letters, even of churchmen like Sydney

Smith. So late as 1808 the witty canon contributed an article to the Edinburgh Review in which he spoke of Methodist itinerants as vermin to be "caught, killed, and cracked"—in a superfine, literary fashion, of course—by the patent pumps of Edinburgh Reviewers! We ought then to admire the moral courage shown by Wordsworth in depicting Peter Bell as he did—a man to whose wounded spirit a Methodist preacher brought healing:

> Calm is the well-deserving brute,
> *His* peace has no offense betrayed;
> But now, while down that slope he wends,
> A voice to Peter's ear ascends,
> Resounding from the woody glade:
>
> The voice, though clamorous as a horn
> Reëchoed by a native rock,
> Comes from that tabernacle—List!
> Within, a fervent Methodist
> Is preaching to his flock!

The appeal to his better nature, and the offer of salvation, proved too much for Peter, who melted into tears—

> Sweet tears of hope and tenderness!
> And fast they fell, a plenteous shower!
> His nerves, his sinews seemed to melt;
> Through all his iron frame was felt
> A gentle, a relaxing power!

In the prefatory note attached to the 1818 edition of the poem occurs this passage: "The

worship of the Methodists or Ranters is often heard during the stillness of the summer evening in the country, with affecting accompaniments of rural beauty. In both the psalmody and the voice of the preacher there is, not infrequently, much solemnity likely to impress the feelings of the rudest character under favorable circumstances."

My object in quoting these passages is to show that Wordsworth's world, to which he transports us for comfort, happiness, and healing, is no old pagan world, haunted by nymphs and satyrs, and studded with mystic shrines, but a world hallowed by Christian worship and echoing the Christian message. These were the words of the preacher which struck conviction to Peter's heart:

> "Repent! repent!" he cries aloud,
> "While yet ye may find mercy;—strive
> To love the Lord with all your might;
> Turn to Him, seek Him day and night,
> And save your soul alive!"

Wordsworth accepted Methodism in its entirety as a beneficent influence, while allowing for the deficiencies that accompany all popular movements; he did not register his inconsistency as Matthew Arnold did, by honoring Wesley and despising Wesley's life's work.

We know that Coleridge had a profound admiration for the character of Wesley, and sug-

gested to Southey the advisability of undertaking the biography. Deep, indeed, ought to be the gratitude of Methodists to Robert Southey for the service he rendered to the cause of truth in giving John Wesley his proper place in the world's estimation. When all deductions are made from its excellences, Southey's "Life of Wesley" remains, to use the term applied to it by a recent Methodist biographer, a "beautiful" book.

Through his father, Southey, and the Wordsworths Arnold inherited a high respect for Wesley; but he is careful to limit his admiration to Wesley the English Churchman. "The fruitful men of English Puritanism and Nonconformity," he remarks in the preface to his "Culture and Anarchy," "were trained within the pale of the Establishment—Milton, Baxter, Wesley." For the gospel message of Wesley and his followers he has scant respect; witness what he says in the preface to "God and the Bible":

"I heard Mr. Moody preach to one of his vast audiences on a topic eternally attractive—salvation by Jesus Christ. Mr. Moody's account was exactly the old (Methodist) story, to which I have often adverted, of the contract in the Council of the Trinity. Justice puts in her claim, said Mr. Moody, for the punishment of guilty mankind; God admits it. Jesus intercedes, undertakes

to bear their punishment, and signs an undertaking to that effect. Thousands of years pass; Jesus is on the cross on Calvary. Justice appears, and presents to him his signed undertaking. Jesus accepts it, bows his head, and expires. Christian salvation consists in the undoubted belief in the transaction here described, and in the hearty acceptance of the release offered by it.

"Never let us deny to this story power and pathos, or treat with hostility ideas which have entered so deep into the life of Christendom. But the story is not true; it never really happened. These personages never did meet together, and speak and act in the manner related. The personages in the Christian heaven and their conversations are no more matter of fact than the personages of the Greek Olympus and their conversations."

Notice the unfair logical step which Arnold takes in this rehearsal. He treats a mere personification, Justice, as a supposed real person, accepted as such by Mr. Moody and his fellow Christians, and then banishes God, Jesus Christ, and the personified Justice to the limbo of shadows as all equally unreal. "Salvation by Jesus Christ, therefore," continues he, "*if it has any reality*, must be placed somewhere else than in a hearty consent to Mr. Moody's (?) story."

Writing to his mother at the close of 1861, when the Mason and Slidell case had strained matters almost to the breaking point between Britain and the United States, Arnold shows how little he is in sympathy with Evangelicals in either country: "Every one I see is very warlike. I myself think that it has become indispensable to give the Americans a *moral lesson*, and fervently hope it will be given them; but I am still inclined to think that they will take their lesson without war. However, people keep saying they won't. The most remarkable thing is that that feeling of sympathy with them (based very much on the ground of their common radicalness, dissentingness, and general mixture of self-assertion and narrowness) which I thought our middle classes entertained seems to be so much weaker than was to be expected. I always thought it was this sympathy, and not cotton, that kept our government from resenting their insolences, for I don't imagine the feeling of kinship with them exists at all among the higher classes; after immediate blood relationship the relationship of the Soul is the only important thing, and this one has far more with the French, Italians, or Germans than with the Americans."

A passage like this, revealing his aloofness from middle-class "meetinghouse" people, goes far to

explain his lack of success as the apostle of a new creed, reducing God to an *impersonal tendency that makes for righteousness*. A sentence like the following puts the whole matter in a nutshell: "Those who, like Christian philosophers in general, begin by admitting that of the constitution of God we know nothing, and who add, even, that 'we are utterly powerless to conceive or comprehend the idea of an infinite Being, Almighty, All-knowing, Omnipotent, and Eternal, of whose inscrutable purpose the material universe is the unexplained manifestation,' but then proceed calmly to affirm such a Being as positively as if he were a man they were acquainted with in the next street, talk idly." And yet such a conviction of the nearness of God to every one of us, of the immediacy of his dealings with human hearts, of his pleading with us like a father, lies at the root of all experimental Christianity. It is the hall-mark of a living hymnology, the essence of revival fervor. In his "Peter Bell" Wordsworth confesses that this attitude of conviction is harmonious with all nature, and that the sudden realization of God's power and mercy as revealed in the gospel story can change a ruffian into a man clothed and in his right mind. But to Matthew Arnold all this is phantasmagorial, fallacious, misleading. Yet surely out of truth comes truth. These

Christian beliefs and sympathies inspired Wordsworth to write the noblest of his odes, possibly the noblest ode in the language. Can we, in estimating Wordsworth aright, calmly place these convictions aside, and coolly rank the poet with an ancient Greek pagan? Arnold's odd attempts at theology led him into strange inconsistencies and assertions of impossibilities, which merit some rough handling.

In his lines "To a Gypsy Child by the Seashore" Arnold reveals how profoundly he was impressed by Wordsworth's Ode on Immortality; the poem, indeed, is not fully intelligible unless we are familiar with the earlier lyric. A better title for the Ode, perhaps, would be, not "Intimations of *Immortality* from Recollections of Childhood," but "Intimations of *Eternality* from Recollections of Childhood." Immortality merely implies continuity of the life begun here; the survival of the personality after the death of the body. But Wordsworth's "Immortality" deals with a prolongation of life backward; a prenatal existence. He argues that the soul comes down from heaven as well as returns thither; that the child, when born into the world, gradually forgets the glory of a world which he has just left. The young human soul comes "not in entire forgetfulness, and not in utter nakedness," but like a "trailing cloud of

glory from God." It comes with a benediction for humanity, with an innate attraction toward goodness and purity. These passages in the Ode remind the reader of the words of our Saviour: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Its opening words are:

> There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth and every common sight
> To me did seem
> Appareled in celestial light;

which means that childhood was a time when the poet felt close to heaven. This introductory passage breathes the fragrance of the exquisitely pure domestic life of England at the close of the eighteenth century. It is not Wordsworth alone who speaks in this strain. To John Henry Newman, trained in a thoroughly Puritan English home, the people around him in his early childhood appeared as angels, not earthborn but visitants from heaven. "I thought life might be a dream, or I an angel, and all this world a deception, my fellow angels by a playful device concealing themselves from me, and deceiving me with the semblance of a material world." We are so apt to think of the Puritan theology of a hundred years ago—those Puritans who, according to Matthew Arnold, "knew not God," that is, *his*

God of sweetness and light—as terrorizing children with the horrors of hell, that we forget the obverse side of the shield, the happy heaven that was ever made present to them. Sin was then recognized as so repulsive in its every aspect that children in well-ordered households lived in an atmosphere steeped in duty and purity. Their later intercourse with the world blunted this simple, exquisite, spontaneous delight in the world of phenomena which God looked upon at creation and declared very good.

Wordsworth did not teach this theory of a prenatal existence as a doctrine; indeed, he expressly rejected so definite an attitude. But he regarded the theory as harmonious with the best Christian aspirations and beliefs, and full of suggestive comfort. In any case, the child world he depicted is the child world of the Christian home.

Arnold dallies with the prenatal conception in his lines "To a Gypsy Child." Unlike Wordsworth's happy lad, who is so full of the light and the life whence it flows that he is rapturous with joy and shouts with delight, this little gypsy is pensive and moody; "clouds of doom are massed round that slight brow:"

> Down the pale cheek long lines of shadow slope,
> Which years, and curious thought, and suffering give.
> —Thou hast foreknown the vanity of hope,
> Foreseen thy harvest, yet proceed'st to live.

O meek anticipant of that sure pain
Whose sureness gray-haired scholars hardly learn!
What wonder shall time breed, to swell thy strain?
What heavens, what earth, what suns shalt thou discern?

Ere the long night, whose stillness brooks no star,
Match that funereal aspect with her pall,
I think thou wilt have fathomed life too far,
Have known too much—or else forgotten all.

The Guide of our dark steps a triple veil
Betwixt our senses and our sorrow keeps;
Hath sown with cloudless passages the tale
Of grief, and eased us with a thousand sleeps.

Ah! not the nectarous poppy lovers use,
Not daily labor's dull, Lethean spring,
Oblivion in lost angels can infuse
Of the soiled glory, and the trailing wing.

The poet addresses her as if she were an angel born again into an alien planet; one destined to have some stray gleams of sunshine in her passage through this stormy world, and to win some few prizes in the struggle of life; but yet likely to be blinded by the "black sunshine," to lose her pristine grace, and to relearn but little of the Wisdom that was formerly her birthright. Earthly life would finally prove *not* worth living:

Once, ere thy day go down, thou shalt discern,
Oh once, ere night, in thy success, thy chain!
Ere the long evening close, thou shalt return,
And wear this majesty of grief again.

This is Wordsworthianism conceived in a contrary way: childhood as a period of pensive sad-

ness; the experiences of life, not as furnishing us with "a faith that looks through death," but with materials to wrap our brows in gloom and make us feel that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. A natural result of eliminating from religious faith and belief the bright hopes and assurances which are woven into our historic creeds, and are essential to our spiritual well-being!

CHAPTER IV

THE MIRROR AND THE CUP

Poets in every age have been fond of insuring dramatic intensity by throwing their own sentiments into some historic personage, who becomes their mouthpiece. The perspective thus obtained allows their audiences to see truth more clearly, away from the disguising and distorting mists and shadows of the present. People are thus led, unconsciously, to assent to opinions which they feel to be true before they grasp the immediate practical import, which might have predisposed their wills unfavorably. Arnold has made use of this device. His historic mouthpiece, as might be expected, is a Greek, a keen, lucid thinker, who knows the value of the phrase "Meden agan" ("Nothing too much"). The hymn of life which Empedocles sings in the drama "Empedocles on Etna" to a harp accompaniment is of intense psychological interest to us, as embodying the poet's own musings and findings on the problem of existence. We must, of course, allow for the "grain of salt," the quantum of dramatic simulation; but substantially the reader must feel that the voice that speaks in these stanzas is the voice of Matthew Arnold.

The counterpart in Browning is "Rabbi Ben Ezra," the closing message of the Hebrew teacher, full of sweet sententiousness. I have called the Greek teacher's message the Mirror, this being the simile with which the poem opens:

> The outspread world to span,
> A cord the gods first slung,
> And then the soul of man
> There, like a mirror, hung,
> And bade the winds through space impel the gusty toy.
>
> Hither and thither spins
> The wind-borne mirroring soul,
> A thousand glimpses wins,
> And never sees a whole;
> Looks once, and drives elsewhere, and leaves its last employ.

It is a Greek simile, which carries us back to Plato and Platonism. The broad-browed philosopher states that man has many ways of creating things, none quicker than that of turning a mirror round and round—you could soon have the sun, and the heaven, and the earth, and yourself, and the animals and plants in the mirror. But the result is evanescence and illusion—all such creation is vanity and vexation of spirit.

To Browning's lyric I have given the name the Cup, as embodying his final conception of life. Here we have not the Greek lucidity, but the Hebrew warmth and energy; existence, not merely in terms of vision, which Aristotle and other

Greek thinkers so greatly overestimated as a gateway of truth, but in terms of the whole being. The typical man is conceived as in sympathetic association with his fellows, finally sitting down with them at the Master's feast:

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"
Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.
He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, would fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.
What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?
Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou
with earth's wheel?

The metaphor of the Potter and the Wheel was particularly distasteful to Arnold, and he rejects its applicability to a sweet and reasonable system of religious thought like Christianity. In his treatise on "Saint Paul and Protestantism" he protests against its use by the great apostle. "It might seem," he remarks, "as if the word *purpose* lured him [Paul] on into speculative mazes, and involved him at last in an embarrassment from which he impatiently tore himself by the harsh and unedifying image of the clay and the potter. But this is not so. . . . He was led into difficulty by the tendency which we have already noticed as making his real imperfection both as a thinker and as a writer—the tendency to Judaize." Arnold goes on to say that Calvinists have made out of this analogy the fundamental idea of their theology; which with Paul was a mere addition, extraneous to the essentials of his teaching, and brought in for mere rhetorical purposes. "It is as if Newton had introduced into his exposition of the law of gravitation an incidental statement, perhaps erroneous, about light or colors; and we were then to make this statement the head and front of Newton's law." Arnold calls it a stock theological figure found in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Apocrypha.

All of which argument is an illogical and

impossible attempt to show that we can separate the higher teaching of Saint Paul from that which Arnold chooses to term "Judaizing." "Take Paul's truly essential idea," he exclaims: "'We are buried with Christ through baptism into death, that like as he was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also shall walk in newness of life.' Did Jeremiah say that? Is anyone the author of it except Paul? Then there should Calvinism have looked for Paul's secret, and not in the commonplace about the potter and the vessels of wrath."

That the metaphor will bear lofty spiritualizing, suited to our modern needs and aspirations, is abundantly shown by Browning's elaboration of it in his "Rabbi Ben Ezra." A vessel in the hand of the workman, being fashioned for further untold service, differs in potency and value from a mere brittle mirror passive in the hold of inanimate forces. Personality is strengthened, not weakened, or effaced, by coming under the influence of higher personality, to be fashioned and used; but personality made the tool of the inanimate means the greater harnessed to the less, and so degraded. Consequently Browning's analogy is full of the expansiveness of wondrous possibilities; Arnold's is contracted by the chill breath of resignation to the inevitable.

The meters in which the two poems are thrown, as the best vehicle for the emotional condition of poet and reader in sympathy, are to a certain degree remarkably similar, each containing four trimeters and a closing hexameter; a "rolling," surging close at once final in its effect and yet preparatory. The impression resembles that made by a long wave breaking upon the sand, and lingering; it retreats only to make way for a series of shorter and less resonant waves.

But notice the fuller music of Browning's stanza. The syllables in Browning's six lines run 6, 6, 10, 6, 6, 12; while those in Arnold's five lines run 6, 6, 6, 6, 12. In Browning's stanza the preliminary expansion in the third line prepares for and increases the expansive value of the final sixth line, giving a swinging, happy movement to the whole stanza:

> Thoughts hardly to be packed
> Into a narrow act,
> Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
> All I could never be,
> All men ignored in me,
> This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

In Arnold's stanza there is a repression characteristic of the poet's whole treatment, and more consistent with the particular theme he

treats. Empedocles is about to take his own life:

> The weary man, the banished citizen,
> Whose banishment was not his greatest ill,
> Whose weariness no energy could reach,
> And for whose hurt courage was not the cure—
> What should he do with life and living more?

The four short lines of six syllables in the hymn stanza, succeeding one another without break, have a chilling effect; and, when the rolling hexameter follows, it swells rather in contrast with the previous trimeters than as a resultant expansion. The actual effect is therefore not really expansive, but semicynical:

> Is this, Pausanias, so?
> And can our souls not strive,
> But with the winds must go,
> And hurry where they drive?
> Is fate indeed so strong, man's strength indeed so poor?

Browning's stanza, on the contrary, makes the two trimeters subordinate in each case to the pentameter and to the hexameter, in an upward movement, continuous and progressive:

> Therefore I summon age
> To grant youth's heritage—
> Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
> Thence shall I pass, approved
> A man, for aye removed
> From the developed brute; a God though in the germ.

Browning's stanza is a natural vehicle for his optimistic hymn of hopefulness and trust; Arnold's

for an emotion less hopeful, tinged with disappointment, distrustful of the future, anxious regarding "the something after death." The intellectual light burns clear; it searches the heart like modern X-rays; warmth there is none in the organic whole. The luckless sage, before he takes the fatal plunge into the glowing crater, envies the mountain its heat and fire. We feel that we have here the uttered aspirations of a "soul which may perish from cold." Of course, the utterance is not Arnold's, any more than Hamlet's soliloquy, "To be or not to be," is Shakespeare's final utterance on life; but it is Arnold as a merciless critic of the illusions of life, Arnold the moral physician diagnosing mankind and having no panacea to offer. In the interpretation of the individuality which he chose in this present case, and in the form of interpretation which he saw fit to put upon the individuality—for Empedocles is a somewhat misty personage historically—the force and excellence of his genius is made apparent. Apart from the dramatic conditions, however, his limitations appear; for, the Empedocles diagnosis over, we ask, What had Arnold himself to offer to make life worth living? Was he much better off than the old Greek?

Arnold is never weary of dwelling upon the limitations of the Hebraic conception of life, and

recommending an Hellenic course of treatment for the modern Pharisee, unfortunately born Wesleyan or Baptist, and fond of the tub of Dissent. The dark complexion of Browning, the rounded contour of his face, the glowing eyes, the curved and full nose, have led many to suspect Jewish ancestry; but an investigation of his ancestral stock yields no evidence whatever of such descent. Yet, in his translation of himself into Rabbi Ben Ezra, the Hebrew sage of a thousand years ago, he has approved the felicity of his choice of a medium. Throughout the poem there is all the glow of Hebrew moral emotion; man treated as the friend of God, who has shepherded him and will finally bring him into the fold, the eternal home of warmth and love.

Arnold's was a different nature. The square face, the thin lips, the straight, narrow nose, suggest nicety and precision and restraint, rather than full-blooded delight in life. He resembles the wise physician, anxious above all things to hold no false hopes that may misguide the patient and wreck his career; reticent, self-contained, keen in vision.

And yet both strove to interpret at once the Hebrew and the Greek genius. We have "Balaustion's Adventures" from the pen of Browning, and Arnold's prose treatises on Isaiah

and the Psalms. But it was rather as an admiring critic than as one wholly in sympathy, even for the time being, with Hebrew ideals that Arnold wrote concerning biblical events and characters; hence he chose a prose medium in their handling. Browning's "A Death in the Desert" has an element of complete poetic absorption in the treatment, which demands a poetic instead of a prose form.

No investigation of a literary kind would be likely to produce more valuable results than a comparison between Browning and Arnold in respect to their temperaments, methods, and principles of life. Happily, in regard to their manner of life, they were alike; though geniuses, they were well-bred, honorable, and high-minded gentlemen; as Arnold said of his brother-in-law, W. E. Forster, "*integer vitae, scelerisque purus.*"

Both Rabbi Ben Ezra and Empedocles are historic names used for poetic interpretation rather than historic personages. The real Empedocles, so far as we can speak at all about him, was a very different man from the poet's creation. Instead of advocating the calm of resignation, as the teaching which ought to be enforced by the wise man who, having seen life, has been disillusioned, he appears to have been somewhat of a popular hero with a craving for distinction.

That he lost his life through an act of vainglorious bravado is a fable, but it shows how he has been estimated. The following are the facts of his career:

Born in the island of Sicily in the fifth century B. C., in the flourishing town of Agrigentum, then a formidable rival of Syracuse, he espoused, though himself of noble birth, the cause of the democratic party. Like all early philosophers, he spent much of his time in traveling, and seems to have learned in the East something of magic and medicine. He gained a wonderful reputation as a prophet and miracle-worker, and assumed a special dress—priestly garments, a golden girdle, the Delphic crown. Wherever he went he was accompanied by a train of attendants, and men considered him divine. His death being wrapped in mystery, fables grew up to account for it. According to one story, he was drawn up to heaven, like Elijah, immediately after some sacred celebration. The more popular version pictured him as having flung himself into the crater of Mount Etna in order that he might pass for a god; but one of his brazen sandals being thrown up revealed the secret.

His teaching has been summed up thus by George Henry Lewes: He recognized two principles, Love, the formative principle, and Hate,

the destructive. Strife is the parent of all things; but it in no way disturbs the abode of the gods, and operates only on the theater of the world. For, inasmuch as Man is a fallen and perverted god, doomed to wander on the face of the earth, sky-aspiring but sense-clouded, so may Hate be only perverted Love struggling through space. His conception of God, the One, was that of a sphere in the bosom of the harmony fixed in calm rest, gladly rejoicing. This quiescent sphere, which is Love, exists above and around the moral world.

We find in the whole portraiture of the man no touch of that world melancholy, that lack of blitheness, which characterizes the Empedocles of Arnold's hymn. Indeed, Arnold's conception is hardly consistent with itself. The calm lucidity of the hymn yields no hint of that pretentiousness in dress and social ambition which appear later in the drama, when, in a passion of disgust with humanity, the sage throws away the golden circlet, the purple robe, the laurel bough:

> This envious, miserable age!
> I am weary of it.
> —Lie there, ye ensigns
> Of my unloved preëminence
> In an age like this!
> Among a people of children,
> Who thronged me in their cities,
> Who worshiped me in their houses,

And asked, not wisdom,
But drugs to charm with,
But spells to mutter—
All the fool's armory of magic! Lie there,
My golden circlet,
My purple robe!

The Empedocles of the hymn, as Arnold outlines him, is a calm, impartial diagnoser of humanity such as Goethe was. Man's intellect critically inspecting humanity — what does the combination give us? The gods are removed and apart; the sun shines, and fortune smiles, upon the just and the unjust; what is immortal and invisible may be set aside and neglected because of its uncertainty; only the intellect and society remain. Let us regulate our desires and adjust our efforts to our possibilities:

For those who know
Themselves, who wisely take
Their way through life, and bow
To what they cannot break,
Why should I say that life need yield but *moderate* bliss?

In Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra" we have a personal God acting immediately on the human soul; these are the two facts of existence. The intellect is seemingly neglected, being lumped with the bodily powers, and the perplexed world of nature and society is relegated to a secondary

place; 'tis merely Time's wheel which runs back or stops—Potter and clay endure:

> He fixed thee 'mid this dance
> Of plastic circumstance,
> This Present, thou, forsooth, would fain arrest:
> Machinery just meant
> To give thy soul its bent,
> Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

There is outlined here, as ideal, no pyramid of life, complete and stately and statesmanlike, such as Goethe dreamed of and Arnold hankered after. "The desire," wrote the German Lavater, "to raise the pyramid of my existence—the base of which is already laid—as high as possible in the air absorbs every other desire and scarcely ever quits me." Immortality thus ceases to be an immediate issue; it is neglected as remote, with few bearings on present *conduct;* in the words of the hymn:

> Is it so small a thing
> To have enjoyed the sun—
> . . . . . .
> That we must feign a bliss
> Of doubtful future date,
> And, while we dream on this,
> Lose all our present state,
> And relegate to worlds yet distant our repose?

Here Arnold's philosophic self is speaking—we feel it to be so. It is Goethe's teaching—he who was so cold toward these aspirations after eternal personal life. "Empedocles on Etna" is in many

respects a puzzle. Classic in treatment, and containing several passages which are often quoted as typically Grecian, yet the general feeling throughout is modern. This is especially true of the hymn, where the topics taken up by the sage are such as appeal to our immediate interests. But it is certainly not a suitable preliminary argument to an act of suicide, as dramatically it ought to be. The advice given by the lyrist would rather lead to wholly different conduct on the speaker's part—to the calm of resignation. Suicide, we feel, should naturally be dubbed by him rank cowardice, worthy of "one of the world's poor, routed leavings, who had failed under the heat of this life's death"; unworthy of the wise adviser who declares in the closing stanza:

> I say: Fear not! Life still
> Leaves human effort scope.
> But, since life teems with ill,
> Nurse no extravagant hope;
> Because thou must not dream, thou need'st not then despair!

In the opening stanzas we have emphasized the huge machinery of the world, and the helplessness of man to do more than appreciate the vastness. Man is portrayed as a mere pendant, who is permitted to peep at the spectacle of "eternal process moving on," but has nothing to dowith carrying out the arrangements. We

remember Pascal's profound saying in regard to the satisfaction afforded by prayer—that man thereby gets strengthened by feeling himself to be a *cause* of things: "Why has God given man prayer, and bidden him use it?—To leave him the dignity of causality."

In the third stanza we find emphasized the deficiency so present in Goethe's constitution, and appearing in a less degree in Arnold's—the lack of the element of complete personal trust. The elements do indeed baffle us, and play and sport with us, but the Power which controls them is a loving personality, in sympathy with his creatures. The idea of a supernatural Power so deficient in sympathy as to laugh at man's inability to solve the puzzle of existence is pagan and early Hebrew, and may suit Arnold's philosophic portraiture; but it is both unchristian and repulsive:

> The gods laugh in their sleeve
> To watch man doubt and fear,
> Who knows not what to believe
> Since he sees nothing clear,
> And dares stamp nothing false where he finds nothing sure.

The next two stanzas are a Stoic protest against a philosophy of necessitarianism or determinism. Empedocles asserts that, even if it be granted that freedom of the will is dubious and difficult of proof, yet it is better to assume it as a basis

of action. Otherwise man's personality is weakened and degraded:

> And can our souls not strive,
> But with the winds must go,
> And hurry where they drive?
> Is fate indeed so strong, man's strength indeed so poor?

The speaker refuses to give a definite answer to the philosophic question; he will confine himself to conduct:

> I will not judge. That man,
> Howbeit, I judge as lost
> Whose mind allows a plan
> Which would degrade it most;
> And he treats doubt the best who tries to see least ill.

Then follows a piece of Arnold's favorite teaching, which he preached in season and out of season. The unfortunate thing about miracles, he insists, is that they do not happen; moreover, they distract men's minds from practical and experimental religion. Arnold was very impatient with those who, while conceding on their own part, and demanding from others, a complete belief in all the miracles of the Bible, yet swiftly and uncompromisingly reject all other miracles whatsoever. He regarded it as an attitude difficult of rational defense, and shutting out good orthodox Christians from wholesome sympathy with religious peoples of other communions. Why impose such arbitrary limits on miraculous

agency, he continued, if it be indeed conceded as an historical reality? In some respects these sixth and following stanzas of the hymn may be regarded as of prime importance in the poem, as calling upon the modern Christian to put himself in the place of a good Greek who had no use for thaumaturgy and Oriental marvels:

> Ask not the latest news of the last miracle,
> Ask not what days and nights
> In trance Pantheia lay,
> But ask how thou such sights
> May'st see without dismay;
> Ask what most helps when known, thou son of Anchitus!

This teaching was later expanded into a novel by the poet's niece, Mrs. Humphry Ward, whose "Robert Elsmere" was a nine days' wonder, and enjoyed an extraordinary popularity, some fifteen years ago. Its burden is, "Miracles do not happen."

To-day a cautious and well-informed science makes no such peremptory statements regarding miracles. A recent commentator on Arnold—Mr. W. H. Dawson—quotes from the scientific veteran, Alfred Russell Wallace, writing so recently as March, 1903, in that very critical journal, The Fortnightly Review: "Although these [recent] discoveries have, of course, no bearing upon the special theological dogmas of the Chris-

tian or of any other religion, they do tend to show that our position in the material universe is special and probably unique, and that it is such as to lend support to the view, held by many great thinkers and writers of to-day, that the supreme end and purpose of this vast universe was the production and development of the living soul in the perishable body of man." Mr. Dawson also quotes from the Cambridge poet and philosopher, F. W. H. Myers, Henry Sidgwick's friend, who died recently: "In consequence of the new evidence all reasonable men a century hence will believe the Resurrection of Christ, whereas, in default of the new evidence, no reasonable men a century hence would have believed it." Arnold's "Nature" and "principles of verification," indeed, belong to a bygone era, and in these matters we can leave him in company with his Greek mouthpiece.

At stanza eleven we have the "double self" described, that striking development of our modern civilization:

> And we feel, day and night,
> The burden of ourselves—
> Well, then, the wiser wight
> In his own bosom delves,
> And asks what ails him so, and gets what cure he can.

Keen and poignant as have been the agonies of this self-examination, yet the result has been

much earnest moral work. The recommendation comes in the following stanza:

> The sophist sneers, "Fool, take
> Thy pleasure, right or wrong."
> The pious wail, "Forsake
> A world these sophists throng."
> Be neither saint- nor sophist-led, but be a man!

In stanza thirteen we have Emerson's teaching that the truth preached by all the sects is but the same as that possessed by every man:

> These hundred doctors try
> To preach thee to their school.
> "We have the truth!" they cry;
> And yet their oracle,
> Trumpet it as they will, is but the same as thine.

And it is followed in stanza fourteen by a metrical exposition of Goethe's favorite theme—"the harmony of a universally experienced nature":

> Once read thy own breast right
> And thou hast done with fears;
> Man gets no other light,
> Search he a thousand years.
> Sink in thyself! there ask what ails thee, at that shrine!

Three stanzas further on the singer touches upon the striking fallacy of the present era, the identification of pain with evil—a fallacy which springs out of that vaguest of phrases, yet one most potent in political influence, the "rights of

man." Here it takes the form of the inherent right of a man to enjoy happiness in this life:

Could'st thou, Pausanias, learn
How deep a fault is this;
Could'st thou but once discern
Thou hast no *right* to bliss;
No title from the gods to welfare and repose.

Man is apt to forget that he is not completely his own, self-determined and self-regulated:

To tunes we did not call, our being must keep chime.

If a man would obtain even moderate bliss, and he is justified in seeking it, he must discipline himself painfully:

We would have health, and yet
Still use our bodies ill;
Bafflers of our own prayers, from youth to life's last scene.

We would have inward peace,
We will not look within;
We would have misery cease,
Yet will not cease from sin;
We want all pleasant ends, but will use no harsh means.

And good people grow peevish when troubles come upon them, as if the powers above specially shielded the pious from harm; but

Streams will not curb their pride
The just man not to entomb,
Nor lightnings go aside
To give his virtues room;
Nor is that wind less rough which blows a good man's barge.

At stanza fifty-five the poet bluntly refuses to accept the argument that the existence of wishes and concepts proves the reality of these concepts —the Cartesian method of proving the existence of God; of that perfection which we, who are finite and limited, can conceive clearly and distinctly, but cannot comprehend or attain to:

> Fools! That in man's brief term
> He cannot all things view,
> Affords no ground to affirm
> That there are gods who do;
> Nor does being weary prove that he has where to rest.

Here Arnold's limited and arbitrary conception of Nature stands in the way of a just appreciation of verification through the needs and claims of personality. In the words of his doubting friend, Arthur Hugh Clough:

> And yet, when all is thought and said,
> The heart still overrules the head;
> Still what we hope we must believe,
> And what is given us receive;
>
> Must still believe, for still we hope
> That in a world of larger scope
> What here is faithfully begun
> Will be completed, not undone.

In stanzas sixty and sixty-one the miserable delusion is ridiculed of passing the best part of our lives in the pursuit of selfish pleasures and then, when appetite fails and pleasures pall, of

offering the dregs of ourselves as a libation to the gods—the fallacy of "young sinner, old saint":

We pause ; we hush our heart,
And thus address the gods:
"The world hath failed to impart
The joy our youth forebodes,
Failed to fill up the void which in our breasts we bear.
"Changeful till now, we still
Looked on to something new;
Let us, with changeless will,
Henceforth look on to you,
To find with you the joy we in vain here require!"
Fools! . . .

In two of the stanzas immediately succeeding we seem to hear Arnold enunciate his own cheerful, amiable, man-of-the-world creed:

And yet, for those who know
Themselves, who wisely take
Their way through life, and bow
To what they cannot break,
Why should I say that life need yield but *moderate* bliss?
. . . . . .
Is it so small a thing
To have enjoyed the sun,
To have lived light in the spring,
To have loved, to have thought, to have done;
To have advanced true friends, and beat down baffling foes?

In stanza sixty-six, which follows, there is a Goethe-like warning against cherishing roseate hopes of future bliss in a remote heaven, by which we are apt to

Lose all our pleasant state,
And relegate to worlds yet distant our repose.

Then follows a short idyllic picture of the village churl, as a person to be envied in his simple happiness. The closing stanza, the seventieth, gives all the comfort that can be given by a disappointed man to those asking for advice:

> Nurse no extravagant hope;
> Because thou must not dream, thou need'st not then despair!

"Empedocles on Etna" was one of Arnold's earlier poems, published anonymously under the name "A"; and, although it gave the title to the volume, he omitted it in the first collection of his poems under his own name. His reasons were based on dissatisfaction with its lack of dramatic movement. Browning, however, highly esteemed the piece, and induced him to insert it in a later issue of poems. The author expressly disclaims, in his Letters, an intention to identify himself with the beliefs and opinions enunciated in such creations as "Empedocles" and "Obermann," where he speaks through a mask: "The Contemporary Review, the Christian World, and other similar periodicals fix on the speeches of Empedocles and Obermann, and calmly say, dropping all mention of the real speakers, 'Mr. Arnold here professes his Pantheism,' or, 'Mr. Arnold here disowns Christianity.' However, the religious world is in so unsettled a state that

this sort of thing does not do the harm it would have done two years ago." The pity is, they contain far less that is painful to orthodoxy than the theological utterances to be found in his prose treatises; while as an intellectual cold water "shower bath" they are distinctly more stimulating.

The poem, however, which must be regarded as a direct negative to the serene, expansive optimism of Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra" is Arnold's "Growing Old," where the poet surely succeeds in giving an ordinary reader a fit of "the shivers":

> What is it to grow old?
> Is it to lose the glory of the form,
> The luster of the eye?
> Is it for beauty to forgo her wreath?
> —Yes, but not this alone.
>
> Is it to feel our strength—
> Not our bloom only, but our strength—decay?
> Is it to feel each limb
> Grow stiffer, every function less exact,
> Each nerve more loosely strung?
> . . . . . .
> It is to spend long days
> And not once feel that we were ever young;
> It is to add, immured
> In the hot prison of the present, month
> To month with weary pain.
> . . . . . .
> It is—last stage of all—
> When we are frozen up within, and quite
> The phantom of ourselves,
> To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost,
> Which blamed the living man.

This is in truth the poetry of disillusion carried to its limits; and a very excellent tonic to the enthusiastic glow of "Rabbi Ben Ezra," if a tonic be needed. Dramatically, it would agree better with the mood of Empedocles, who, when his song was ended, plunged into the crater; thus shattering his outworn and dingy mirror—the "gusty toy."

CHAPTER V

ARNOLD'S SYMPATHY WITH THE BRUTE CREATION

The relation of animals to man is treated very sweetly and sympathetically in the poems of Matthew Arnold; and one fault I have to find in the otherwise excellent pocket edition of his works published in the Golden Treasury series is that it fails to give a corner to these animal poems. The Christian world in the past few centuries has grown much more tender to dumb creatures, and is beginning to recognize duties and responsibilities undreamed of before. Dumb creatures can teach us many deep lessons in life. We find this genial social current at its strongest and best in Arnold.

There is but little in the Scriptures to draw us close to animals, with the single exception of the lamb. And even the loving scriptural use of the lamb, in analogy, is largely due to the fact that it was used sacrificially. All throughout the life of the chosen people, indeed, the sheep was cherished and valued, for it represented to them not only helplessness, but also meekness, patience, and submission. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that the goat or kid was despised as com-

pared with the sheep or lamb. In Prov. 30. 31, the he-goat is referred to as one who is stately in march, for he was in the habit of leading the combined flock; and so he became typical of the princes of the people: "There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going: a lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any; a greyhound; an he-goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up." And so in Zechariah: "Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats;" that is, the leaders. And Isaiah speaks of the he-goats of the earth, the kings of the nations, rising up from their thrones.

We must be on our guard, then, against misconceiving the language of our Lord in Matt. 25. 32, where he speaks of the blessed being separated from the accursed as the sheep are separated from the goats (or rather kids): "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." This passage ought not to be interpreted too absolutely. We know that a metaphor does not go on all fours, and here the analogy should be limited to the act of separation—familiar to those living in a pastoral country like Pales-

tine, where goats and sheep herd together; but even while awaiting the filling of the trough they instinctively range themselves apart. Our Lord's language does not imply that the kids are either less valuable or less mild and tractable than the lambs. And yet, with that tendency to antithesis which at certain periods of history has been excessive, the goat has been degraded, and his name despised, as if he were a type of the sinner. Did Matthew Arnold in his beautiful sonnet "The Good Shepherd with the Kid" read later views into the symbolism? Was the kid meant really to represent the child of a sinner? Possibly the symbolism of early Christianity had already come to this antithesis by the time of Tertullian, at the close of the second century.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD WITH THE KID

He saves the sheep, the goats he doth not save!
So rang Tertullian's sentence, on the side
Of that unpitying Phrygian sect which cried,
"Him can no fount of fresh forgiveness lave,
Who sins, once washed by the baptismal wave."
So spake the fierce Tertullian. But she sighed,
The infant Church! of love she felt the tide
Stream on her from her Lord's yet recent grave.
And then she smiled; and in the Catacombs,
With eye suffused but heart inspired true,
On those walls subterranean, where she hid
Her head 'mid ignominy, death, and tombs,
She her Good Shepherd's hasty image drew—
And on his shoulders, not a lamb, a kid.

To turn to other animals mentioned in the Scriptures. The Oriental dog to this day is pretty much of a cur. If we enter Asia from the West, we find Mohammedan intolerance expressing itself in terms of this useful animal. "Dog of a Christian!" is the Moslem's favorite epithet. And the dog in Mohammedan towns and cities is a scavenger, unmannerly and unclean. If we approach Asia from the East, matters are still not satisfactory. The Japanese dog is an ungainly, half-wolfish animal, and the other breeds which have been introduced are allowed to multiply to an unseemly degree; for the Buddhist dislike of the shedding of blood prevents a proper supervision and weeding out of the worthless and unnecessary. In the Old Testament the type of dog most frequently referred to—and there are only about thirty cases of such reference—is the unclean pariah dog. The phrase "dead dog" should indeed be translated "pariah dog."

In the New Testament a new note is struck in Matt. 15.27, where the Syrophœnician woman pleads for kinder treatment: "It is not meet," remarked our Lord, "to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs." And she said, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Here we seem to touch Roman

life and habits, and a friendlier relationship with the canine tribe—the beginnings of the modern attitude.

With the teaching of Augustine came an unfriendly attitude toward all kinds of animals, however harmless. The way to heaven was supposed to be in the path of sense-subjection, with the animal in mankind trampled under foot. Saint Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of the Schoolmen, while allowing a soul to animals, declared that the sensitive soul in the lower animals is corruptible; while in man, since it is the same in substance as the rational soul, it is incorruptible. The kindly attitude toward the dumb creation of the saintly Francis d'Assisi is one of the bright spots in the social history of the Dark Ages. On one occasion, as he was on a preaching tour, the birds flocked around him as if to bid him welcome. "Brother birds," was his salutation, "you ought to praise and love your Creator very much. He has given you feathers for clothing, wings for flying, and all that is needful for you. He has made you the noblest of all his creatures; he permits you to live in the pure air; you have neither to sow nor to reap, and yet he takes care of you." Whereat the birds arched their necks, spread out their wings, opened their beaks, as if to thank him, while he went up and down among

them and stroked them with the border of his tunic, at length sending them away with his blessing. On another occasion, as he preached in the open air, the swallows chirped so loudly as to drown his voice. "'Tis my turn to speak, sister swallows," he expostulated; "be quiet, and wait till I have finished."

This friendly tone is absent from the pages of "The Imitation of Christ," with all its beauty; for example, "If thy heart were right with God, all creatures would be for thee a mirror of life, and a volume of holy doctrines." This is sermonizing, not the language of the heart. Saint Francis was a living example of Coleridge's teaching:

> He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small.

Coleridge does not mean that kindness is an equivalent for prayer, but that the prayerful spirit is essentially the loving spirit. Pharisaic piety is not really prayerful. Arnold held Saint Francis in the highest honor, as a figure of magical power and charm, esteeming his century, the thirteenth, as "the most interesting in the history of Christianity after its primitive age, more interesting than even the century of the Reformation"; and the interest, he adds, centers chiefly in Saint Francis. He it was who brought religion home

to the hearts of the people, and "founded the most popular body of ministers of religion that has ever existed in the church."

Saint Francis, finding prose too tame a medium for the outpouring of his spirit, threw his meditations into poetry, and has left us a "Canticle of the Creatures," which Arnold translates for us in his essay entitled "Pagan and Mediæval Religious Sentiment." Artless in language and irregular in rhythm, this canticle was intended for popular use:

O most high, almighty, good Lord God, to thee belong praise, glory, honor, and all blessing!

Praised be my Lord God with all his creatures; and especially our brother the sun, who brings us the day, and who brings us the light; fair is he, and shining with a very great splendor: O Lord, he signifies to us thee!

Praised be my Lord for our sister the moon, and for the stars, the which he has set clear and lovely in heaven.

Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather, by the which thou upholdest in life all creatures.

Praised be my Lord for our sister water, who is very serviceable unto us, and humble and precious and clean.

Praised be my Lord for our brother fire, through whom thou givest us light in the darkness; and he is bright, and pleasant, and very mighty, and strong.

Praised be my Lord for our mother the Earth, the which doth sustain us and keep us, and bringeth forth divers fruits, and flowers of many colors, and grass.

Praised be my Lord for all those who pardon one another for his love's sake, and who endure weakness and tribulation; blessed are they who peaceably shall endure, for thou, O most highest, shalt give them a crown!

Praised be my Lord for our sister the death of the body, from whom no man escapeth. Woe to him who dieth in mortal sin! Blessed are they who are found walking by thy most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm.

Praise ye, and bless ye the Lord, and give thanks unto him, and serve him with great humility.

Comparing this hymn with another hymn he had rendered from the Greek of the Sicilian Theocritus, Arnold remarks how the first admits just as much of the world as is pleasure-giving; while the second "admits the whole world, rough and smooth, painful and pleasure-loving, all alike but all transfigured by the power of a spiritual emotion, all brought under a law of supersensual love, having its seat in the soul. It can thus even say, 'Praised be my Lord for *our sister the death of the body*.' "

How unconventional was Saint Francis! The prudish monks of his time would not allow even the females of animals to enter the precincts of their monasteries; but one day when at Siena he asked for some turtledoves, and thus addressed them: "Little sister turtledoves, you are simple, innocent, and chaste; why did you let yourselves be caught? I shall save you from death, and have nests made for you, so that you may bring forth young, and multiply according to the commandment of our Creator." Again when, at

Greccio, they brought him a young hare which had been caught in a trap, "Come to me, brother leveret," he said; and when the poor thing, being set free, approached him, he took it up, caressed it, and then laid it down that it might run off; but it returned to him again and again, so that he had to take it himself to the woods.

We notice at this period a general growing attachment to dogs. A proverb comes to us from the time of Saint Bernard, "*Qui me amat, amet et canem meum*," which old Heywood, before Shakespeare's time, translated, "Love me, love my dog."

The kinship had grown close by the sixteenth century. The story is told of Luther that when his dog Hans was angrily growling he soothed him with the words, "Don't growl, little Hans; you too will go to heaven and have a little golden tail to wag." We see, therefore, that dogs had now names and individuality; a fact which comes out in Shakespeare's "Lear" pathetically:

> The little dogs and all,
> Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me.

So complains the afflicted king.

A century later Newton and his dog Diamond come on the scene. The household pet had chanced to overturn a candle on his master's table, whereby some important papers were re-

duced to ashes. "Ah! Diamond, Diamond, thou little knowest the damage thou hast done," was all the amiable sage could say in reproof.

Descartes had carried his dualism of mind and matter to such an extreme that, in the face of common sense, he denied real feelings to animals, and declared they were mere automata. Leibnitz, who was four years old when Descartes died, and the contemporary of Newton, refused to accept such a doctrine; but while he claimed for animals the immaterial principle of sensitive life, which has a continuity apart from matter, yet he held that we must not confound with other forms, or souls, minds or rational souls which are of a higher rank, and resemble little gods, made in the image of God, and having within them some ray of the divine enlightenment. For this reason God governs minds as a father looks after his children; while, on the other hand, he deals with other substances as an engineer works with his machine.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, both in Protestant and Catholic countries, animals were but little esteemed. The doctrine of innate human depravity leaves but meager possibilities for poor brutes. A high sacramentarian of the time of Queen Anne actually taught that infants are mortal like the brutes until they are baptized!

The great metaphysician Samuel Clarke, of Norwich, to whom Bishop Butler owed so much, taking a higher view of human nature than this ultra-Augustinian, much preferred to allow the possibility of immortality to the brute creation rather than to deny to man an immortal soul at birth. Joseph Butler was of the same mind, greatly to the surprise and disgust of many good people; and John Wesley, with a largeness of mind that does not surprise close readers of his Journal, did not disagree with the good bishop. The time had gone by when a philosopher might assert that he could not have discovered that infants possessed souls, but for the later development they showed as adults. This fallacy was largely due to the old overemphasis of the intellectual in man, of the purely discursive reason.

It is in the poems and letters of Cowper, Gray, and Burns that we first find animal friendships made the theme of serious treatment. Burns rises to his highest when he takes to his heart a poor sheep like Mailie, or a dog like Luath, or a nameless field mouse. Why, asks he, of the wee mousie, whose little biggin he had unwittingly demolished, why should you startle

> At me, thy poor earthborn companion
> And fellow mortal?

And so dear was Mailie to his heart that we feel that the Elegy, with its mock-heroics, would never have been written had the poor sheep really been cruelly killed before her time. The fact is, Mailie was rescued in time by her kind master and friend.

In the century which intervened between the writing of Burns's "To a Field Mouse" and Matthew Arnold's "Geist's Grave" there is nothing similar in literature of equal pathos, at least in poetry. Perhaps Dr. Brown's immortal "Rab and His Friends" should not be forgotten. The tributes to canine fidelity in Scott and Wordsworth are not in the same category. Sir Walter's attachment to Maida was part of his life, and he brings this close relationship between man and beast into his "Guy Mannering," in his sympathetic treatment of Dandie Dinmont and the four eager terriers. But the treatment remains objective, and does not enter into the psychology of the relationship.

The pretty little dachshund Geist, one of four canine pets who brought brightness into the Arnold household, lived but four years with them:

> That loving heart, that patient soul,
> Had they indeed no longer span,
> To run their course, and reach their goal,
> And read their homily to man?

That liquid, melancholy eye,
From whose pathetic, soul-fed springs
Seemed surging the Virgilian cry,
The sense of tears in mortal things.

Here the poet appears naturally to revert to the classical concept, the *eleos*, which enters into Virgil's pathetic "*Sunt lacrimae rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt.*"

But while Butler, in searching for stable grounds whereon to place the doctrine of immortality, finds it impossible to rule out summarily the brute creation, "which groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God," Arnold resignedly accepts a common lot of annihilation with them:

That steadfast, mournful strain, consoled
By spirits gloriously gay,
And temper of heroic mold—
What, was four years their whole short day?

Yes, only four!—and not the course
Of all the centuries yet to come,
And not the infinite resource
Of Nature, with her countless sum

Of figures, with her fullness vast
Of new creation evermore,
Can ever quite repeat the past,
Or just thy little self restore.

Stern law of every mortal lot!
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,
And builds himself I know not what
Of second life I know not where.

But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
On us, who stood despondent by,
A meek last glance of love didst throw,
And humbly lay thee down to die.

Surely it is a pity to use our love for unselfish animal friends in order to point so despairing a moral. Nelly Arnold's pet canary, Matthias, has also received a memorial tribute from the poet:

Poor Matthias!—Found him lying
Fall'n beneath his perch and dying?
. . . . . .
—Songster thou of many a year,
Now thy mistress brings thee here,
Says it fits that I rehearse,
Tribute due to thee, a verse,
Meed for daily song of yore
Silent now for evermore.

The poet remarks upon the greater aloofness of the feathered tribe from man. We can be joyful with the sportive antics of a dog or a cat, we can soothe these pets when they are troubled, stroke or pat them back into cheerfulness; but

Birds, companions more unknown,
Live beside us, but alone;
Finding not, do all they can,
Passage from their souls to man.
Kindness we bestow, and praise,
Laud their plumage, greet their lays;
Still, beneath their feathered breast,
Stirs a history unexpressed.

The poet's farewell to Matthias is a farewell of resignation, in the mildly pathetic key that suits the situation:

> Fare thee well, companion dear!
> Fare for ever well; nor fear,
> Tiny though thou art, to stray
> Down the uncompanioned way!
> We without thee, little friend,
> Many years have not to spend;
> What are left will hardly be
> Better than we spent with thee.

Why was it that the publication of Matthew Arnold's Letters, a few years ago, proved so profound a disappointment? They were eagerly waited for, in the absence of autobiographical or other matter. It is well known that he shrank almost morbidly from publicity, and left instructions at his death that no biography should be published. His letters are bright and human; they tell us of his children and his pets; there was Atossa, the favorite cat:

> Cruel, but composed and bland,
> Dumb, inscrutable and grand.
> So Tiberius might have sat,
> Had Tiberius been a cat.

He seems to have had a growing devotion to flowers. But there are no signs in the letters that he had sufficiently fathomed the depths of human nature, interested himself sufficiently in the social problems of the age, or learned

the meaning of humanity and nature in so thorough a way as to justify his sweeping negations covering the universe and the future. He rises merely to a sufficient height to view the drama of history, and exclaim in a passion of disappointment, "O, the pity of it!" It seemed to Richard Holt Hutton that Arnold felt a subtle delight in the expression of that exquisite pathos of which he was undoubtedly a master; there is an evident ultimate reaction in his moods from the cold pessimism into which he drifts. He swings back again into the warmer current of life and hope and trust. It would be well for his readers to make sure that this "moral shower-bath" treatment is followed in their case also by the same reactive glow.

CHAPTER VI

MATTHEW ARNOLD AND MODERN SCIENCE

The question has often been asked, What exactly was Arnold's attitude toward modern science? In his writings he professes to be keenly scientific, but his treatment of things and his general affiliations were always distinctly literary. We do not associate him with painful and accurate laboratory work; and his etymologies and generalizations in the field of philological science are neither founded on first-hand investigation nor are they rigidly accurate. Oxford, also, is usually credited with being almost mediæval in her philosophic and scientific outlook. We remember the pathetic exclamation of a puzzled Oxford don who resented the influx of German methods into the peaceful antiquity of the university on the Isis: "I wish," he moaned, "that Jarman philosophy and Jarman theology were all at the bottom of the Jarman Ocean!"

And yet the fact remains that, whatever German institutes have since accomplished, Oxford was, a hundred years ago, the home and cradle of modern geology. The father of geology was William Smith, born in the county of Oxford.

In his practical duties as surveyor and engineer of canals and irrigation works Smith gathered together valuable original material which he used for the publication of maps, and these maps are of great historic moment. His work was passed on to an Oxford scholar, William Buckland, later Dean of Westminster; a deanery, by the way, which ranks in importance higher than many English bishoprics. The dignity of science—real science—was thus installed in an honored place in the Anglican Church; one reason, certainly, why Matthew Arnold was so proud of his church. Buckland, making use of these maps, was able to follow out Smith's indications, and to trace back the history of the world's mutations. His work was familiar to Thomas Arnold. Three years before the latter came up as a freshman to Corpus Christi College in Oxford, Buckland had been appointed a fellow of the college, and in 1813 he became University Professor of Geology. His influence was great in thinking circles. He did much to infuse a new scientific spirit into the university, and at the same time to quiet the perturbations of the timidly orthodox, who were afraid of the effect of these scientific revelations on the traditional Mosaic cosmogony, which they associated with absolute religious truth. Dr. William Buckland was a consistent Christian, as well as a

leader in science, and was not afraid of proclaiming truths which revealed God's manner of working in his own universe. His methods fascinated Thomas Arnold, who, as we learn from Justice Coleridge, became one of his most earnest and intelligent pupils, and was afterward known for the skill and ease with which he made use of geological facts in enforcing moral truths.

The friendship between Buckland and the Arnolds continued throughout their lives. The geologist served as a village pastor in Hampshire, and then as a canon of Christ Church, before he was appointed Dean of Westminster; and marriage ties strengthened the friendship between the two families.

The friend and pupil of Buckland could not write a poem like "Empedocles on Etna" as if he were a pure ancient Greek. It was morally impossible. The modern attitude toward the created world of to-day, as a phase in a long history of progress, is notable in the writings of both Thomas and Matthew. Like the great Scotchman Thomas Chalmers, Buckland was appointed lecturer by the Bridgewater trustees, and in 1836 appeared his treatise, which aimed to prove, by the aids of science, "The Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation." When Baron Bunsen visited England two years

later he found Buckland "persecuted by bigots for having asserted that among the fossils there might be a preadamic species."

Readers of "In Memoriam" know how the notion of a universe which had existed and produced grass, and vegetables, and creatures, for countless ages before the advent of man, dominated the thought of the poet Tennyson; and how the expression of the thought puzzled many good people who conceived it irreligious to think of a world much over four thousand years old. Very early in Matthew Arnold's life, history thus came in a mystic preadamic form; and the conversations to which he listened at his father's table, entered into by clergymen and dignitaries of the church, accustomed him to conceive of a process in creation working away back in the dim beginnings of time. This conception is present in his poem "The Future":

> Who can see the green earth any more
> As she was by the sources of Time?
> Who imagines her fields as they lay
> In the sunshine, unworn by the plow?
> Who thinks as they thought,
> The tribes who then roamed on her breast,
> Her vigorous, primitive sons?

For geology, however, Matthew Arnold had no special liking; the natural science which attracted him most was botany. His passionate

love of flowers appears in his letters, but is by no means so evident in his poems; not so evident, for instance, as in the poems of Tennyson, who was always at home in the garden, among scented lanes, and in the flower-strewn meadows. Perhaps the most striking flower passage in Arnold occurs in his "Thyrsis," when he addresses the cuckoo:

> Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
> Soon will the high midsummer pomps come on,
> Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
> Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
> Sweet-william with his homely cottage-smell,
> And stocks in fragrant blow;
> Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
> And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
> And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
> And the full moon, and the white evening star.

It was one of the poet's great objects in life to teach youth to delight in the beauties of God's earth as the Master delighted in them; he who bade his disciples gaze upon the lilies of the field, which neither toil nor spin, but whose glory surpasses the raiment of princes. There was a morbid teaching abroad which associated holiness with an indifference to the beauties of earth. A good Mr. Cecil is quoted as having so expressed himself: "I want to see no more sea, hills, valleys, fields, abbeys, or castles. I feel vanity pervading everything but eternity and its concerns, and per-

ceive these things to be suited to children." Arnold was right in declaring that the Bible, which he knew so well and quoted so often, teaches no such ascetic attitude.

Some of his letters are delightfully full of flower lore, revealing what accurate botanical knowledge lay beneath his descriptions of nature in his poems. Take, for instance, the closing passage of a letter to his friend Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, written from Stockbridge, Massachusetts, just two years before his death: "The flowers and trees are delightfully interesting. On a woody knoll behind this cottage the undergrowth is kalmia, which was all in flower when we came. The *Monotropa uniflora* (Indian pipe or corpse plant, as they call it here—excellent names) is under every tree, the *Pyrola rotundifolia* in masses. Then we drive out through boggy ground, and towering up everywhere are the great meadow rue, beautifully elegant, the *Helianthus giganteus* and the milkweed—this last (*Asclepias*) in several varieties, and very effective. I believe it is an American plant only, and so I think is the shrubby cinquefoil, which covers waste ground, as the whin does with us. . . . The trees, too, delight me. I had no notion what maples really were, thinking only of our pretty hedgerow shrub at home; but they are, as, of course, you know, trees

of the family of our sycamore, but more imposing than our sycamore and more delicate."

And again, in one of his letters to his mother, he reveals this same passion—there are many such passages: "I find it very, very useful and interesting to know the signification of names, and had written to ask him (Professor Deutsch) whether *Jerusalem* meant the 'vision of peace' or 'the foundation of peace'; either meaning is beautiful, but I wished for the first, as the more beautiful. However, you will see what he says. I should have written to you yesterday, but was taken out for a walk by the little girls. Our white violets have prospered. . . . I know of but one clump of blue violets near Harrow, and that is kept well picked by village children. However, we found one or two in it, to the little girls' great delight."

His "Bacchanalia; or, The New Age" begins with a nature touch of this kind:

> The business of the day is done,
> The last-left haymaker is gone.
> And from the thyme upon the height,
> And from the elder-blossom white
> And pale dog-roses in the hedge,
> And from the mint-plant in the sedge,
> In puffs of balm the night air blows
> The perfume which the day forgoes.

Suddenly the scene appears to be filled with a procession of Mænads and Bacchantes, and ancient

Greece and her magic world are before the poet. But all is a passing illusion, the figures vanish and the voices are still:

Ah, so the quiet was!
So was the hush!

Then comes the New Age, with all its violence and vigor:

Thundering and bursting
In torrents, in waves—
Caroling and shouting
Over tombs, amid graves—
See! on the cumbered plain
Clearing a stage,
Scattering the past about,
Comes the new age.
Bards make new poems,
Thinkers new schools,
Statesmen new systems,
Critics new rules.
All things begin again;
Life is their prize;
Earth with their deeds they fill,
Fill with their cries.

The singer calls upon the ideal poet to rise to the opportunities spread before him, to mirror forever the life that he sees and feels. Why is he mute?

Look, ah, what genius,
Art, science, wit!
Soldiers like Cæsar,
Statesmen like Pitt!
Sculptors like Phidias,
Raphaels in shoals,

Poets like Shakespeare—
Beautiful souls!
See on their glowing cheeks
Heavenly the flush!

Then again comes the chill disillusion:

Ah, so the silence was!
So was the hush!

It is noticeable that Arnold in these lines makes no reference whatever to the triumphs of science, nor mentions any great name in the scientific world. After all, to him the most imposing achievements of man, since the time of Newton and Priestley—man's harnessing of the winds and the waves—meant little more than Nuremberg toys. He sought to dwell in the realm of the Eternal.

But Arnold's realm of the Eternal rests on a misconception of what the Eternal really is. The Eternal is not that which a critic, sitting in judgment upon, can term finally exquisite and satisfying to the æsthetic sense. There is as much of the Eternal in a great, moving steamship—although its mechanism and machinery may be antiquated five years hence—as in Saint Peter's at Rome or in a masterpiece of Raphael. The man who lives the Christ life to-day in some repulsive slum of a great, unlovely city may be closer to the Eternal than Homer, whose poetry has charmed twenty-five centuries of mankind. All human beings who

fulfill the destiny which God has allotted to them are ambassadors of the Eternal; not the mere fortunate few who, happening to possess a literary or artistic gift, have produced masterpieces before which criticism is disarmed. Christ came not to judge the world, or as a supreme artist, but to give the world more of the divine energy and life. Whether this energy realizes itself in the evanescent products of to-day, or the (comparatively) more enduring literary and artistic masterpieces of Greece, Italy, and England, the Eternal Glory, the enduring Power of Love, is behind both, and informing both; the products themselves are on a secondary plane. The master worker in science and in law is worthy of our respect equally with Homer and Raphael as an instrument of the Eternal. Part of his strength lies in the belief that he is getting nearer the mind of the great Being who is working out his purposes in this universe; and that man's relation to the universe is not a constant, but a ratio which is constantly growing in favor of man. If so, the great discoverers in science, and the noble army of efficient workers in every field of human activity, deserve a place with the poets, sculptors, and painters as revealers of the Divine and Eternal.

CHAPTER VII

A NINETEENTH CENTURY SADDUCEE

From the beginning of his career to its close Arnold was a close and devout reader of the Scriptures, not only of the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, but also of the Apocrypha, several of the books in which have been recommended to the devout for their reading by the authorities of the Anglican Church. One of these is the Wisdom book of the Son of Sirach, commonly known as Ecclesiasticus, a noble utterance; and its pages were familiar to Arnold. It was down among the list of books he took with him on his American tour to be read, and one of those marked out as having been read. In the very closing days of his life he must have been turning up its pages, for an excerpt from the thirty-eighth chapter appears in his notebook: "When the dead is at rest, let his remembrance rest; and be comforted for him, when his spirit departeth from him."

The term "Pharisee" has been abundantly used in modern discussions to give edge to sarcasm, and the party that Arnold constantly antagonized within and without the church have had this

epithet constantly flung at them. The associated name "Sadducee," however, has not been so popular. And yet, if the term "Pharisee" suits well a rigid Evangelical, that of "Sadducee" comes remarkably near fitting Arnold's peculiar position in religious matters.

A conservative excessively reverent toward the past, an aristocrat by birth and temperament, one who looked coldly on all religious innovations and enthusiasm, the typical Sadducee had little influence outside of Jerusalem. He was strong in denials. He denied the resurrection of the dead, and refused to accept the plea that there must be retribution in a future state—a plea which appealed so strongly to the poor and needy Jews scattered abroad after the Exile. He denied the existence of angels and demons. He rejected fatalism, and, like the Stoic, regarded man as master of his own fate. A man must realize himself in this present world, and work out his own salvation here on earth; so declared the high-class Sadducee.

Ecclesiasticus may be regarded as the first and greatest of Sadducee productions. It is the work of an author touched by the fascination of Greek culture, who yet reveres the law of his own people. As with Arnold, there is no dualism in Ecclesiasticus. Sin is not something eternal realizing

itself in the personality of Satan. "When the wicked man curses Satan he curses his own soul," says Ben Sirach. Compare this with Arnold's dictum, that sin is merely our own impotence or weakness; let a man be only true to himself and he can overcome sin by his own force and goodness.

This slack-water period, as it may be termed, in Jewish history, when the canon of the Old Testament was complete and that of the New Testament was still in the future, had special attractions for modern thinkers like Arnold and Huxley. It was a time when the Greek *Logos* or Word, and the Greek *Sophia* or Wisdom, came into relations with the Hebrew law and righteousness. A mysterious Other World, inhabited by God and angelic beings, and destined for the saints, had not yet laid hold upon the religious concepts of the people. The leading minds were satisfied with the declaration of Micah (6. 8): "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Some of the later prophets seemed to nineteenth century moralists to stand on a pinnacle of truth which makes their great proclamations and exhortations better fitted for general use to-day than any other portions of the Scriptures. Dr.

Thomas Arnold, in one of his letters, notes that the poet George Herbert, in one of his poems, uses language of this kind, as if he regarded the revelations of the patriarchal church almost with envy, because they had closer communion with God than Christians have. "All which seems to me to arise out of a forgetfulness or misapprehension of the privileges of Christians in their communion with the Holy Spirit. . . . The third relation of the Deity to man is rather the most perfect of all, as it is that in which God communes with men, not 'as a man talketh with his friend,' but as a Spirit holding discourse invisibly and incomprehensibly, but more effectually than by any outward address—with the *spirits* only of his creatures." The discipline of the Old Testament, says his son, may be summed up as a discipline teaching us to abhor and flee from sin; the discipline of the New Testament, as a discipline teaching us to die to it.

Matthew Arnold preferred an attitude that was negative on the subject of the life after death and demanded no reliance on a mystic Third Person. So impressed was he with the educational value and availability of the Old Testament prophetic teaching that he edited for school use the chapters in Isaiah dealing with the great destiny of the nation, and known as the Restora-

tion-Prophecy. His little book contained the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, with ample notes and a long preface, and was entitled "The Great Prophecy of Israel's Restoration." The book, although now very scarce, never actually became a text-book.

A new meaning had been read into these chapters by recent research, and Arnold was anxious to popularize this interpretation. Instead of the term "Servant of the Lord" being made to apply immediately to Christ and his mission, it was understood as having a first reference to the times in which it was written. Suffering Israel was the servant upheld by the Eternal, the chosen one in whom his soul delighted; upon whom was poured his Spirit, who was destined to proclaim his law of truth and righteousness to the nations.

Availing himself of the labors of Ewald, Gesenius, Kuenen, and other learned biblical scholars, Arnold threw his convictions into book form in "Literature and Dogma," a brilliant attempt to rationalize the Scriptures. Many good Evangelicals had become reconciled to the theory that in the Old Testament we have a gift from God whose value lies not in its being in a literal sense a divine production, but as containing an invaluable record of divine dealings with a chosen

people. Arnold was in the same camp with orthodox Christians in claiming for the Jewish people a special mission in history, a peculiar passion for righteousness, a unique genius for handling the deepest religious questions; in asserting that the man who does not know the Bible knows not the meaning of religion. Unbelievers openly scoff at this claim, and have as little use for Arnold's defense of Holy Writ as for Dr. Pusey's.

How completely, in this rationalizing work, Arnold forgot the wise adage of the saintly old teacher—"Conserve the mystery"—is evident from the well-known passage dealing with the three Lord Shaftesburys. And yet he was intensely in earnest, and did not mean to scoff—far from it. Here is the passage: "As the Romish doctrine of the mass, the Real Presence, is a rude and blind criticism of 'He that eateth me shall live by me,' so the Protestant tenet of justification, 'pleading the blood of the Covenant,' is a rude and blind criticism of 'The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many.' It is a taking of the words of Scripture literally and unintelligently. And our friends, the philosophical Liberals, are not slow to call this, too, a degrading superstition, just as Protestants call the doctrine of the mass a degrading superstition. We say, on the contrary, that a degrading superstition

neither the one nor the other is. In imagining a sort of infinitely magnified and improved Lord Shaftesbury, with a race of vile offenders to deal with, whom his natural goodness would incline him to let off, only his sense of justice will not allow it; then a younger Lord Shaftesbury, on the scale of his father and very dear to him, who might live in grandeur and splendor if he liked, but who prefers to leave his home to go and live among the race of offenders and to be put to an ignominious death, on condition that his merits shall be counted against their demerits, and that his father's goodness shall be restrained no longer from taking effect, but any offender shall be admitted to the benefit of it on simply pleading the satisfaction made by the son; and then, finally, a third Lord Shaftesbury, still on the same high scale, who keeps very much in the background, and works in a very occult manner, but very efficaciously nevertheless, and who is busy in applying everywhere the benefits of the son's satisfaction and the father's goodness—in an imagination, I say, such as this there is nothing degrading, and this is precisely the Protestant story of Justification. And how awe of the first Lord Shaftesbury, gratitude and love toward the second, and earnest coöperation with the third, may fill and rule men's hearts so as to transform their conduct we

need not go about to show, for we have all seen it with our eyes."

This is the famous passage on the Trinity which Arnold saw fit later to regret, because of the offense it gave. There is a moral and intellectual seriousness and earnestness underlying the whole of "Literature and Dogma" which makes the reader lament that one so ill equipped for theological discussion should have entered so airily into the theological arena. Of course, its publication meant a complete break, not only with Trinitarians, but even with ordinary Unitarians. In its pages Arnold carries his dislike of anthropomorphism so far as to deny personality to God, who becomes in its pages "the Eternal."

Oddly enough, Arnold had never considered himself to be, nominally or sympathetically, in the Unitarian camp. From his father he had inherited a dislike to Unitarians, as "political Dissenters," and he seems always to have fought shy of them in England. Toward American Unitarians he was more friendly, as was Dr. Thomas Arnold. "I heard some time since," writes the latter from Rugby in 1832, "that in the United States, where the Episcopal Church has expelled this creed (the Athanasian) the character of Unitarianism is very different from what it is in England, and is returning toward high Arianism,

just as here it has gone a downward course to the very verge of utter disbelief." They could not have gone farther than his son. The present Minister of Education at Westminster, son of a Unitarian minister, recently defined the modicum of religion which he considered ought to be taught in the state schools. The majority of parents, he said, would undoubtedly like their children to be taught the simple elementary truths, the Fatherhood of God, the responsibilities of man, and the existence of a future state. Matthew Arnold's creed summarily disposes of the first and last as mere *Aberglaube*, of the nature of superstition.

Arnold early came under the spell of Emerson, and the teaching of the two men had much in common. He records his debt to the New Englander in an early sonnet:

WRITTEN IN EMERSON'S ESSAYS

O monstrous, dead, unprofitable world,
That thou canst hear, and hearing hold thy way!
A voice oracular hath pealed to-day;
To-day a hero's banner is unfurled;

Hast thou no lip for welcome?—So I said.
Man after man, the world smiled and passed by;
A smile of wistful incredulity,
As though one spake of life unto the dead—

Scornful, and strange, and sorrowful, and full
Of bitter knowledge. Yet the will is free;
Strong is the soul, and wise, and beautiful;

> The seeds of godlike power are in us still;
> Gods are we, bards, saints, heroes, if we will!—
> Dumb judges, answer, truth or mockery?

The two thinkers, in many respects so unlike, had yet essentially the same mission. Bathed and steeped in Christian thought, Emerson spent his life in reconciling it with Greek speculation and modern scientific results. Lowell was right when, in his "Fable for Critics," he calls him "half Greek":

> C.'s the Titan, as shaggy of mind as of limb,—
> E. the clear-eyed Olympian, rapid and slim;
> The one's two thirds Norseman, the other half Greek,
> Where the one's most abounding, the other's to seek.

Emerson's mission was to protest against the worldly or utilitarian spirit, and his aims were never negative. What he preached was eternal truth, revealed by the Almighty in the glory of the starry firmament, the splendor of the sunsets, the majesty of the mountains, the mystic beauty of ocean and river, and the still small voice in the heart of man. His words are often semi-Oriental in tone, which Arnold's never are. Man, he declared, by rights and often in reality, should be regarded as a divine incarnation, linking the eternal world with the phenomenal. This Oriental insistence upon personality as the last and greatest thing in the universe makes Emerson

an optimist, while Arnold's doctrine that our personalities must finally submit themselves to a Force is pessimistic.

One crusade waged by Arnold with zeal and insistence was surely but a hollow mockery. He never tired of proclaiming the need and advisability of a national church, with its noble and refined liturgy, its trained clergy, and its historic temples; "a great national society," as he termed it, for the promotion of what is commonly called *goodness*, and for promoting it through the most effectual means possible, the only means which are really and truly effectual for the object—through the means of the Christian religion and of the Bible. In the essay from which I have just quoted he declares that the "essence of religion is grace and peace." The more the sense of religion grows, he declares, and of religion in a large way—the sense of the beauty and rest of religion, the sense that its charm lies in grace and peace—the more will the present attitude, objections, and complaints of those who dislike an established church seem unworthy.

But surely these words, *charm*, *grace*, *peace*, place Christianity upon an æsthetic basis rather than on its true foundation of saving power. The emphasis is entirely wrong; just as when a well-meaning person declares that only a Christian

man can be a real gentleman. The term *gentleman* is secondary and superficial, and is too small to include the deeper word *Christian;* so *charming*, *graceful*, *peaceful* fail entirely to indicate the reality of Christ's teaching. The terms are compatible with a mere religion of conformity, which is death, not life. "Unity and continuity in public religious worship are," he asserts, "a need of human nature, an eternal aspiration of Christendom; but unity and continuity in religious worship joined with perfect mental sanity and freedom. A Catholic church transformed is, I believe, the church of the future."

Arnold's somewhat supercilious references to hymns reveal the weakness of his position. It was mainly through Christian hymns, popular ditties sung by the people, that Western Europe was civilized. These Latin hymns, with their forceful and measured lines, were a creation in the world's history; for the first time uniting, in one energizing expression, poetry, music, and moral conviction. The people sang them as nothing in the world's history had ever been sung before; for the singing signified new life to them. Again, at the Reformation, the soldiers of the new creed of individual faith, hope, and love, each with Bible in his pocket, read therein his "title to a mansion in the skies," and went forth to war singing, "Ein' feste Burg ist

unser Gott"—Luther's glorious battle hymn—or some other song of intense moral conviction. The "Jesus" hymns of the Moravians were an inspiration to the founder of Methodism; and his brother's "Jesus, Lover of my soul," meant far more to the century than all the poems of Pope, Thomson, Gray, and Goldsmith together. The Roman Catholic Church, clinging in a conservative way to ancient habits, failed to make use of this great lever for uplifting the masses; but popular hymns lie at the core of our militant Protestantism. Their value is dynamic, however, rather than æsthetic; hence Arnold's small esteem for hymns. "Hymns, such as we know them," he declares, "are a sort of composition which I do not at all admire. I freely say so now, as I have often said it before. I regret their prevalence and popularity among us. Taking man in his totality and in the long run, bad music and bad poetry, to whatever good and useful purposes a man may often manage to turn them, are in themselves mischievous and deteriorating to him. Somewhere and somehow, and at some time or other, he has to pay a penalty and to suffer a loss for taking delight in them. It is bad for people to hear such words and such a tune as the words and tune of 'O happy place! when shall I be, my God, with thee, to see thy face?'—worse for

them to take pleasure in it. And the time will come, I hope, when we shall feel the unsatisfactoriness of our present hymns, and they will disappear from our religious services."

Sixteen hundred years ago, perhaps the most valuable element in humanity was to be found in the devoted Christians who worshiped secretly in the gloom of the catacombs. To what sort of melodies they sang their "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" can never probably be known exactly, but, as a recent authority remarks, "the Christian religion had little to do in those days with fashion and the fine arts. . . . The apostles did not travel as music teachers. . . . If the words sung expressed a heartfelt Christian faith it made little difference what modes or melodies were used with them."

Coming down to more recent days, we may feel certain that the singing of psalms in the family circle, when Elgin and such quaint and quavering tunes "beet the heavenly flame," has usually been more blunt and crude than finished or artistic. Both the music and the poetry have often been distinctly "bad," and yet the resultant effects cannot be described as "mischievous and deteriorating."

And yet we must agree with Arnold that nothing deserves more to be antagonized and frowned

upon than the combination of bad theology and bad poetry, to be found in too many popular revival hymns. Arnold knew what a good hymn was, and could appreciate the best type. He has left on record his admiration of the sublime stanza of Isaac Watts:

> See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
> Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
> Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
> Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Still, the poem in which this stanza appears is more suited for Christian meditation than for general singing.

Arnold's criticism of modern hymns is altogether too sweepingly unfavorable; but it was through no lack of reverence. His reverent attitude toward the Bible is best brought out, I think, in the introductory paragraph of two lectures he delivered before the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh, the subject being "Bishop Butler and the Zeit-Geist." He begins by complimenting his audience on the breadth of their reading: "Your students in philosophy have always read pretty widely, and have not concentrated themselves, as we at Oxford used to concentrate ourselves, upon one or two great books. However, in your study of the Bible you got abundant experience of our attitude of mind

toward our two philosophers. Your text-book was right; there were no mistakes *there*. If there was anything obscure, anything hard to be comprehended, it was your ignorance which was at fault, your failure of comprehension. Just such was our mode of dealing with Butler's sermons and Aristotle's ethics. Whatever was hard, whatever was obscure, the text-book was all right, and our understandings were to conform themselves to it. What agonies of puzzle has Butler's account of self-love, or Aristotle's of the intellectual virtues, caused to clever undergraduates and to clever tutors; and by what feats of astonishing explanation, astonishingly acquiesced in, were these agonies calmed! We at Oxford used to read our Aristotle or our Butler with the same absolute faith in the classicality of their matter as in the classicality of Homer's form." That what followed was not in accordance with this attitude of implicit trust toward Butler may be gathered from the lines of his sonnet:

WRITTEN IN BUTLER'S SERMONS

Affections, Instincts, Principles, and Powers,
Impulse and Reason, Freedom and Control,
So men, unraveling God's harmonious whole,
Rend in a thousand shreds this life of ours.

Vain labor! Deep and broad, where none may see,
Spring the foundations of that shadowy throne
Where man's one nature, queen-like, sits alone,
Centered in a majestic unity;

And rays her powers, like sister-islands seen
Linking their coral arms under the sea,
Or clustered peaks with plunging gulfs between,

Spanned by aërial arches all of gold,
Whereo'er the chariot wheels of life are rolled
In cloudy circles to eternity.

That he placed John Wesley above the author of the Analogy he makes plain in the course of his criticism. "Butler," he says, "met John Wesley [who admired the Analogy], and one would like to have a full record of what passed at such a meeting. He [Butler] was of a most reverend aspect; his face thin and pale, but there was a divine placidness in his countenance which inspired veneration and expressed the most benevolent mind. His white hair hung gracefully on his shoulders, and his whole figure was patriarchal. This description would not ill suit Wesley himself, and it may be thought, perhaps, that here, at any rate, we find the saint. . . . But still the total impression left by Butler is not exactly that of a saint."

To Arnold, Wesley, with his "genius for godliness," was a type of saintliness. It is interesting to find him more in harmony with the great revivalist than with the Anglican bishop. Later on in this discussion of Butler, speaking of the Greek word *epieikeia*, that which has an air of consummate truth and likelihood, of "sweet

reasonableness," he declares in words which Wesley would have heartily indorsed: "You know what a power was this quality in the talkings and dealings of Jesus Christ; *epieikeia* is the very word to characterize true Christianity. And this Christianity wins, not by an argumentative victory, not by going through a long debate with a person, examining the arguments for his case from beginning to end, and making him confess that, whether he feels disposed to yield or no, yet in fair logic and fair reason he ought to yield. But it puts something that tends to transform him and his practice—it puts this particular thing in such a way that he feels disposed and eager to lay hold of it; and he does lay hold of it, though without at all perceiving, very often, the whole scheme to which it belongs; and thus his practice gets changed. This, I think, everyone will admit to be Christianity's characteristic way of getting people to embrace religion. Now, it is to be observed how totally unlike a way it is to Butler's, although Butler's object is the same as Christianity's—to get people to embrace religion. And, the object being the same, it must strike everyone that the way followed by Christianity has the advantage of a far greater effectiveness than Butler's way; since people are much more easily attracted into making a change than argued into it." The

absence of "saintliness" in the appeal made by Butler is evidently present to the critic, who remarks that the total impression left by the bishop is not exactly that of a saint. Arnold is evidently in far completer harmony with Wesley, who preached, interpreted, and practiced Christianity as a *life*.

Arnold objects to Bishop Butler that he regards our interests and principles of action as if they were things as separate, fixed, and palpable as bodily organs; that he speaks of benevolence as if it had always gone on secreting love for our neighbor, and of compassion as if it had gone on secreting a desire to relieve misery, and of conscience as if it always had sent forth right verdicts, just as the liver secretes bile. He is right in changing Butler's expression "the desire for happiness" into "the instinct to live," and making this impulse the motor principle of life. The experiences of the unity which we know as "I" are divisible only in an abstract manner; for the "I" cannot be broken up into a combination of warring or harmonious instincts and principles to be regarded as separately existing, and not as mere facts of the individual spirit. But, in postulating the existence of two lives or selves in a man, Arnold creates a duality which also is defensible only as an abstraction for the analyst;

and possibly he intends his words to be construed in this way. "It is not true," he states, "that the affections and impulses of both alike [self-love and benevolence] are, as Butler says, the voice of God; the self-love of Butler, the 'cool study of our private interest,' is not the voice of God. It is a hasty, erroneous interpretation by us, in our long, tentative, up-struggling development of the instinct-to-live, the desire-for-happiness, which *is* the voice of our authentic nature, the voice of God; and it has to be corrected by experience. . . . Jesus Christ said, 'Renounce *thyself!*' and yet he also said: 'What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and yet lose *himself*, be mulcted of himself?' He said: 'I am come that men might have *life*, and might have it more abundantly;' and 'ye will not come to me that ye may have *life!*' And yet he said: 'Whosoever will save his *life* shall lose it!' This psychology," says Arnold, "carries everyone with it"—the "psychology of Jesus Christ, which without the least apparatus of system is yet incomparably exacter than Butler's, as well as incomparably more illuminative and fruitful." He considers that there is no danger, such as Butler felt, in making the instinct to live that which we must set out with in explaining human nature, so long as we remember that only in the

impersonal life and with the higher self is the instinct truly served and the desire truly satisfied.

But it is Arnold's use here of the word *impersonal* that is unsatisfactory. The higher life is not impersonal, but more truly personal; nor is man asked to lose himself in the universe by "joining the choir invisible." The same speaker tells those who figuratively "lose their lives" that great is their reward in heaven. It is through the reception of other personalities unto our own personalities that we finally realize ourselves and come to find God. "Christ in us, the hope of glory" is not a mere trope; it is a spiritual fact, at the root of our religious experience. Arnold quotes Schleiermacher approvingly, and accepts what the German says in the matter of recognizing Platonic and Greek thought in our modern Christianity; but he fails to appreciate the value of Schleiermacher's psychology.

> And what heart knows another?
> Ah! who knows his own?

These are the dreamy questions of the poet. His conception of friendship suffers under this limitation:

> Like driftwood spars, which meet and pass
> Upon the boundless ocean-plain,
> So on the sea of life, alas!
> Man meets man—meets and quits again.

The bond is a temporary one, liable to be broken again at any time; "to friends," he says in one of his poems, "we have no natural right;" we have no property in them. But this is just what Schleiermacher and the modern idealist deny.

When Archbishop Trench lay dying his chaplain began to read at his request the glowing passage from Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy beginning, "For God has not given to us the spirit of fear." When he came to the words, "I know in whom I have believed," "Hold, hold!" cried the dying saint; "not *in* whom, but *whom*—I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed to him against that day."

It is this immediate knowledge and belief of the heart which is lacking in Arnold's whole treatment of religious themes. His psychology is the out-of-date psychology of the isolated man, which marked the eighteenth century type of thought; poor, little, feeble man, a mere accident in the great machinery of the universe! Arnold's "Nature" is a misconception of God's creation:

> Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
> Man's senseless uproar mingling with his toil,
> Still do thy quiet ministers move on,
>
> Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;
> Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil;
> Laborers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

But man is an integral portion of the great eternity of mind which makes use of matter as a master makes use of a servant. Mind is, so to speak, a great ocean, which moves fluidly, with no loss, but a constant gain. We are heirs, not only of what our fathers have done in the material world, but of what they have been unable to do in the spiritual world—their apparently fruitless efforts, their ideals and longings; and there is room in the universe for the individual survival of everyone. Not force, conceived as present in atoms, is power, but personality; and the words *wise*, *good*, *true* have a meaning only when used as attributes of some personality. The communion of saints perpetuates itself by the communication of virtue from one person to another. No worse psychology could be uttered than Arnold's statement in his sonnet "The Divinity," that "Wisdom and goodness they are God." To pray to wisdom and goodness is an impossibility and an absurdity. Will, aspiration, sympathy, love, beauty are unthinkable apart from the beings in whom they inhere, and who, by living, give them reality. The reality in the world is the warm, expansive life of persons in touch with the center of Life and Love. We are mysteriously bound to one another and to God, as the branches

of a tree belong to each other and to the trunk and roots. We find absolute truth not by isolating ourselves from our fellows, but by identifying our lives with theirs. "The social consciousness," says Schleiermacher, "finds its satisfaction only in stepping out of the limits of its own personality, and taking up into its own personality the things pertaining to other personalities. Every one must concede as a matter of experience that it is his natural condition to stand always in a many-sided fellowship of feeling, and his feeling of absolute dependence on God has been awakened by the communicative and stimulative power of human utterance."

In his strangely unsympathetic and antiquated attitude toward the ocean Arnold failed to grasp the conception which makes of the great encircling element not a dragon or force of evil, as it appeared to the early world, but the symbol of an all-prevailing, all-embracing Deity. Schleiermacher's theology has received a poetic interpretation from Whittier:

> Immortal Love, forever full,
> Forever flowing free,
> Forever shared, forever whole,
> A never-ebbing sea!

The Quaker poet here gives expression to a truth which has refreshed and vivified modern

theology, and has brought us nearer to the mind of God. Noble as were Homer and the Greeks, full of inspiration as were the Hebrew prophets whom Arnold so passionately admired, still there were left in the domain of religion some fresh aspects of truth and beauty for the modern world to grasp, and this is one of them.

Truth does not lie buried in the tombs of ancient Greece. With all his sweet reasonableness, his culture and his open-minded rationalism, Arnold was strangely old-fashioned and conservative in his religious outlook—a veritable Sadducee. After all, the future of Judaism and of the world was not with the Sadducees. Men like Paul, reared Pharisees, gave up their early creed to become teachers of the Cross, which was to the Jews a stumbling-block; to the Greeks, foolishness; and to those Hellenized Jews, the Sadducees, both one and the other.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD IN ARNOLD

On one occasion the Platonist and idealist, Frederic W. H. Myers—known to all lovers of Wordsworth for his classic little biography of the poet—was walking under the elms in the Fellows' Garden of Trinity College, Cambridge, in company with an earnest-eyed woman. His companion was George Eliot. "She, stirred somewhat beyond her wont, and taking as her text the three words which have been used so often as the inspiring trumpet call of men—the words, God, Immortality, Duty—pronounced with terrible earnestness how inconceivable was the *first*, how unbelievable the *second*, and yet how peremptory and absolute was the *third*." In making this emphatic profession of belief the novelist pretty well expressed the intellectual attitude of the Victorian age, a century of spiritual doubt and unrest.

To the devout Christian the three conceptions of God, Immortality, and Duty are bound together by an indissoluble tie. God is personal; Immortality rests on a personal basis; Duty is a personal relation with a perfect Being whose constant help-

fulness constitutes part of his perfection. As soon as we make God an abstraction we cause the hope of immortality to vanish, and destroy the very roots of Duty as an expulsive, impulsive reality. Just as plants and the simpler denizens of the sea are steadily heliocentric—turning ever to the sun—so are human hearts theocentric; and must be, for their spiritual health.

Many are willing to accept, as fairly well embodying their religious aspirations on the subject of immortality, the lines of George Eliot, which begin with a phrase that has given its name to a book of the day, with a passing vogue:

THE CHOIR INVISIBLE

O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues. So to live is heaven.

Such is the Positivist creed—a creed of abstractions; a creed limited to the amelioration of earthly conditions; a creed that has no use for the continuation of personality after death. When, fifty years ago, it was proposed to start in London a Positivist church, based on the teachings of Auguste Comte, eager minds resolved to supply it

with a liturgy, and George Eliot was asked to provide an anthem. "The Choir Invisible" was the response; and it is an emphatic negation of personal immortality, as a fond dream of the imagination.

To me the lines have never appealed, either as attractive religion or as good poetry. Rather would I describe them as a string of platitudes, lacking the essence of noble and lucid poetry. Immortal life begins and ends with personality. As the babe starts out on the voyage of life by resting its eyes on its fond mother, so the dying saint looks heavenward to the divine face of the Master, which blesses, invites, and welcomes.

Queen Victoria, who had shown herself for half a century the ablest statesman in the broad British empire, repeated with her dying breath those lines of personal appeal:

> My faith looks up to thee,
> Thou Lamb of Calvary,
> Saviour divine!

Her natural expression at this supreme hour was just one of those hymns which, from his Olympian height of art perfection, Arnold was wont to regard so superciliously.

And yet no one was more attached to that exquisite heritage of our Christian faith, the church liturgy, and the other concrete expressions

of our devotional life. But he spent an immense amount of energy and sweet persuasiveness in trying to prove that heaven is a kind of land of Lyonnesse, an exquisite Nowhere, and that the Bible is a sort of "Morte d'Arthur," with only a literary truth and reality finally appertaining to it. He wanted no brand-new Comtist anthem and Comtist liturgy.

Arnold was a victim of the fallacy that religious beliefs can be stripped of mystery; that they are all, like the planks in a political platform, subject to general discussion for final approbation or rejection; and that religious constituencies have to be educated up to a condition in which the attitude of rational discussion becomes normal and habitual. The church might thus be regarded as an intellectual club or symposium, the members whereof, animated by a spirit of sweet reasonableness, are able to adjust their platform to the needs of the community.

He fails strangely to recognize that final force of tremendous individual conviction, demanding from the will unhesitating obedience; all with Arnold is on the basis of an easy and refined optimism. A deeper and more thorough realization of what religious faith really is would have taught him that the world is not moved and impelled onward in this way. Civilizations are borne to new lands,

not by intelligent exponents of their advantages, but by fearless missionaries whose whole life is a *credo;* and a civilization without this *credo* is a tottering structure. The gospel of the cross, preached by Saint Paul, was not, to the Greeks, sweet reasonableness, but foolishness. Its acceptance has ever demanded an exercise of deep personal humility and submission of the proud intellectual will, which Arnold, with all his sympathetic nature, disdainfully rejected. The final truth which makes us free is not found in an enthusiastic recognition of intellectual abstractions, but in mystic union with the personality which guides the universe; a mystic union which demands a constant exercise, not so much of self-repression and negative self-renunciation as of obedient activity and ardent devotion. Warmth and faith as displayed in religious matters, often crudely and oddly, Arnold treats with a pitying sadness which suits the case dramatically; it is the attitude of the superior person face to face with the great reality of life. It is as if a cultured Greek had returned to earth and was gazing at our modern world, "where clash contending powers, Germany, France, Christ, Moses, Athens, Rome." Himself one of the most amiable and forgiving of men, who never harbored a grudge or cursed an enemy, yet he had some of the "defects

of his qualities," to use a French phrase. He was too amiable to profess a creed which meant aught but sweetness and light to everybody concerned. Because there is much severe denunciation in Matthew's gospel, therefore John's gospel is undoubtedly the sacred record which brings us closer to the Master!

George Eliot, who has supplied us with a pseudo-anthem of abstractions which does *not* bring religion nearer to us, has also furnished us, in perhaps the greatest of her stories, with a brilliant description of religion in its essence. The germ of "Adam Bede," she herself tells us, was an anecdote told her by her Methodist "Aunt Samuel" Evans, wife of her father's younger brother. They were sitting together one afternoon, when it occurred to the elder to relate the story of a visit she had to make to a condemned criminal—a very ignorant girl, who had murdered her child and refused to confess. Mrs. Evans stayed with her praying during the night; and the poor creature at last broke out into tears and confessed her crime. The good woman afterward accompanied the girl in the cart to the place of execution—for there occurred no melodramatic reprieve as in the case of Hetty Sorrel!

How beautifully George Eliot tells the story in her "Adam Bede":

"Dinah held the clinging hand, and all her soul went forth in her voice:

" 'Jesus, thou present Saviour! Thou hast known the depths of all sorrow; thou hast entered that black darkness where God is not, and hast uttered the cry of the forsaken. . . .

" 'Saviour! it is yet time—time to snatch this poor soul from everlasting darkness. I believe—I believe in thy infinite love. What is *my* love or *my* pleading? It is quenched in thine. I can only clasp her in my weak arms, and urge her with my weak pity. Thou—thou wilt breathe on the dead soul and it shall arise from the unanswering sleep of death.

" 'Yea, Lord, I see thee coming through the darkness, coming like the morning, with healing on thy wings.' "

Here the impassioned prayer actually breaks at last into a rhythmic chant. This is a prayer for power, not a mere aspiration after purity and perfection. Is it all a mere illusion? A commemorative tablet in the Wesleyan chapel at Wirksworth tells that it was "Erected by numerous friends to the memory of Elizabeth Evans, known to the world as 'Dinah Bede,' who during many years proclaimed alike in the open air, the sanctuary, and from house to house, the love of Christ."

Was her story a mere fairy tale? Is the Christ she invoked a personage of the past, and powerless to save? So Arnold tells us, through the lips of Obermann:

While we believed, on earth He went,
And open stood His grave.
Men called from chamber, church, and tent,
And Christ was by to save.

Now He is dead! Far hence He lies
In the lorn Syrian town;
And on His grave, with shining eyes,
The Syrian stars look down.

In vain men still, with hoping new,
Regard His death-place dumb,
And say the stone is not yet to,
And wait for words to come.

Ah, from that silent sacred land,
Of sun, and arid stone,
And crumbling wall, and sultry sand,
Comes now one word alone!

From David's lips that word did roll,
'Tis true and living yet:
No man can save his brother's soul,
Nor pay his brother's debt.

Alone, self-poised, henceforward man
Must labor; must resign
His all too human creeds, and scan
Simply the way divine.

This is a direct blow leveled at a cherished Christian belief. We know from his prose writings how much Arnold disliked the doctrine of substitution or imputed righteousness. "In the

scientific language of Protestant theology," he states in his "Saint Paul and Protestantism," "to embrace Christ, to have saving faith, is 'to give our consent heartily to the covenant of grace, and so to receive the benefit of justification, whereby God pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us.' This is mere theurgy, in which, so far as we have yet gone, we have not found Paul dealing. Wesley, with his genius for godliness, struggled all his life for some deeper and more edifying account of that faith, which he felt working wonders in his own soul, than that it was a hearty consent to the covenant of grace and an acceptance of the benefit of Christ's imputed righteousness. Yet this amiable and gracious spirit, but intellectually slight and shallow compared to Paul, beat his wings in vain. . . . 'He that believes in Christ,' says Wesley, 'discerns spiritual things: he is enabled to taste, see, hear, and feel God.' There is nothing practical here. A company of Cornish revivalists will have no difficulty in tasting, seeing, hearing, and feeling God, twenty times over, to-night, and yet may be none the better for it to-morrow morning."

An ungracious and shallow comment. If anyone can draw from Arnold's rosewater religion of sweetness and light a power for salvation such

as has changed many a Cornish miner from a brute into a saint, then it will be time to get rid of the mystery of Christ's imputed righteousness.

Arnold's aloofness from the main current of vital religion is modified when he actually touches noble personality. In no instance is this more apparent than in the exquisite apostrophe to his dead father, the elegy known as "Rugby Chapel." Rejecting elsewhere, for intellectual reasons, the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, and cutting it out peremptorily from his patchwork "system," he there restores this elemental truth of Christianity to its proper place. Faith and trust bear him for the moment irresistibly on their wings. In one other passage in his poems heightened emotion carries him up to the same glorious inconsistency. It is present in those stanzas addressed to Marguerite, where he bids her a long farewell:

> We school our manners, act our parts—
> But He, who sees us through and through,
> Knows that the bent of both our hearts
> Was to be gentle, tranquil, true.
>
> And though we wear out life, alas!
> Distracted as a homeless wind,
> In beating where we must not pass,
> In seeking what we shall not find;
>
> Yet we shall one day gain, life past,
> Clear prospect o'er our being's whole;
> Shall see ourselves, and learn at last
> Our true affinities of soul.

We shall not then deny a course
To every thought the mass ignore;
We shall not then call hardness force,
Nor lightness wisdom any more.

Then, in the Eternal Father's smile,
Our soothed, encouraged souls will dare
To seem as free from pride and guile,
As good, as generous, as they are.

Here he is face to face with an ideal womanly personality.

To the memory of his great and good father Arnold remained true in word, and thought, and deed during his life. He never ceased to worship God as his father had worshiped him. It was after attending divine service at the church of Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) in Liverpool that a fatal heart spasm carried him off.

Arnold's practical interpretation of prayer was far fuller and richer than the meager definition we gather from his writings—a mere "energy of aspiration toward the principle of good." He early learned what real prayer was at his father's knees. One of the passages which Dr. Thomas Arnold entered in his journal a few weeks before his death is quite touching: "May God keep me in the hour of death through Jesus Christ; and preserve me from overfear, as well as from presumption. Now, O Lord, whilst I am in health, keep my heart fixed on thee by faith, and then

I shall not lose thee in sickness or in death. Guide and strengthen and enkindle me, and bless those dearest to me, and those committed to my charge, and keep them thine, and guide and support them in thy holy ways. Keep sin far from them, O Lord, and let it not come upon them through any neglect of mine."

A modern poet of extreme naturalistic creed has quoted a phrase applied to Matthew Arnold —"David, the son of Goliath." While admitting its quaint absurdity, he yet asserts its essential applicability. No doubt Mr. Swinburne intends to imply that the elder Arnold was a narrow bigot or Philistine, while his son rose into a higher plane of undogmatic cosmopolitanism. But, on the other hand, it might with more justice be contended that the younger Arnold's cosmopolitanism was his weakness, while his father's straight creed and sturdy patriotism were his strength. A father's greatness of soul often breathes through the impassioned words of his son. It was William Burns—the most conscientious man in the whole countryside—who inspired the stanzas of "The Cotter's Saturday Night." To his doubting son the elder Arnold remained through life a beam of hope, reviving the great truths of the Fatherhood of God and of a fuller life beyond the grave:

> Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
> Conscious or not of the past,
> Still thou performest the word
> Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live—
> Prompt, unwearied, as here!

The second line of the above, with its dubious note, is to be regretted; but a fuller note is struck later on in the poem, where the communion of saints is addressed:

> Servants of God!—or sons
> Shall I not call you? because
> Not as servants ye knew
> Your Father's innermost mind,
> His who unwillingly sees
> One of his little ones lost—
> Yours is the praise, if mankind
> Hath not as yet in its march
> Fainted, and fallen, and died!

There is the same tender, vibrating string touched here as in his sonnet "The Good Shepherd with the Kid." The flimsy negations and abstractions of his pseudo-theology are brushed aside, and he speaks the language of Christian faith and hope. He thinks and talks of life as God's service; of God as the keeper of our souls,

> who unwillingly sees
> One of his little ones lost.

The "secret of Jesus," whereof Arnold talks elsewhere so freely and so ineffectually, is the power to help others to a fuller life. It is not mere self-renunciation; it is the realization of a

fuller life by the transmission of life to those who stand in need of it. Arnold recognizes this in his "East London" sonnet:

> I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
> "Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene?"
> "Bravely," said he, "for I of late have been
> Much cheered with thoughts of Christ, *the living bread.*"

The words "thoughts of" may be eliminated, to the strengthening of the whole passage. The insertion of the intellectual link is less in harmony with the religious trust in Him who came that his flock might, through him, have life, and have it more abundantly, and through this transmitting vitality attain to sonship and heirship. Arnold describes the earthly mission of these sons and heirs very nobly:

> Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
> Strengthen the wavering line,
> Stablish, continue our march,
> On, to the bound of the waste,
> On, to the City of God.

The lines form a fitting peroration to the great elegy on his much-loved father; they are *last words* in a full and special sense.

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